Marxism Today

October 85 85p

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INTERVIEW WITH ROY HATTERSLEY

Beatrix Campbell on Labour's New Leadership

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FOCUS

THE HANDSWORTH RIOTS

With monotonous predictability, the police and government have attempted to drain off the political significance of the Birmingham riots by identifying drugs as the source of the disturbance. West Midlands Chief Constable, Geoffrey Dear, and his colleagues have assured us that a full police investigation will reveal a picture of drug barons as the puppeteers jerking the strings of helpless black youths with neither the volition nor reason to mount a meaningfull offensive on a society they feel has shown them contempt.

'A cry for loot' was Home Secretary Douglas Hurd's sarcastic reply to a question about the deep unrest the Handsworth riot suggested. According to Hurd, greed was the motive and criminality the commission behind the actions. The rioters had no political axe to grind: only an appetite for unruliness and for material goods.

Few groups have suffered from stereotyping as much as black youth. Now, new details have been added to the dope pushing, pathologically dishonest state sponger who dislikes work and organises his day around listening to ghettoblasters and getting stoned on herb. Absent from the debates on the riot is any facility for self criticism. The senior policemen and MPs who have been so vocal in their condemnation of blacks might well reflect on some of the ways in which black youth has been pushed to the very margins of society.

Over the past six or seven years, the government has been trying to subdue local authority spending. It has avoided some of the implications of Scarman's proposals (which were themselves limited). It has enacted immigration legislation which has obvious racist connotations. It has tried to buy off black youth with youth training schemes that have little relevance when there is no job at the end of them. So why should there be such a surprise when blacks strike back against society?

Their rage has been directed at a system they feel – quite legitimately – has denied them equal participation. Blacks' aggression has been directed not so much at the police, as in previous comparable incidents, but at the system they personify. In Birmingham, young blacks have destroyed houses in which they live, shops on which they depend for provisions, environments in which they live. They may not seem politically intelligible targets, but perhaps we should see the anger directed at symbols: the institutions attacked are symbols of a system blacks see exploiting them. They've burned and looted the actual community they live in, a community which stands as a testament to the impoverishment of their lives. They haven't destroyed their environments because they need a new ghettoblaster, TV, or video, but because they've lost faith in the capacity of government institutions to take into account their interests.

Aftermath at Handsworth riot-Lozells Road on Wednesday morning

There can be no question about the underlying cause of this and, indeed, other similar episodes. It is racism. Presently, I have research going on in areas adjacent to Handsworth, where racism is rife.[1] The type of racism in these areas is of less importance than a less-visible type of racism. The research also spans middle-class areas in the West Midlands. Here, the problem is that residents do *not* take decisions that could have far-reaching consequences for blacks: decisions aren't made to recruit more blacks into industry and commerce, or to implement procedures for boosting their chances of promotion or arranging for changes in education to make it more adequate for a multicultural society. These non-decisions manifest themselves in the form of institutional racism. Even Scarman recognised this after the 1981 riots.

If ever anyone needed evidence of the divisive effects of racism, they should look to Handsworth where local blacks set ablaze a row of shops owned in the main by Asians. Just as in Los Angeles in 1965 when blacks wrecked Jewish-owned stores, and in Miami in 1980 when blacks rioted in protest at what they saw as preferential treatment handed to Cubans, Birmingham black expressed resentment at what they perceiv to be progress achieved by Asians. Minorit groups often judge their own accomplish ments against those of other minorit groups and inter-ethnic conflict can ofte ensue. It is, of course, wholly unacceptabl to cite this as a cause of the disturbance But, having talked to residents in th immediate aftermath of the riots, I believ there is a genuine antagonism betwee blacks and Asians in the area. Blacks hav now arrived at the conclusion that racism exists as it has done for years, but Asian have somehow exempted themselves. I this perception, Asians have, through thei entrepreneurial activities, worked their wa into a system that works basically to Asians disservice. Whereas blacks are prepared t voice their protest and oppose the system Asians merely capitulate.

Distorted as the perception may be, i fuels the kind of awareness that proliferate in Handsworth. A 300-yard strip of smokin ruins that were once Asian restaurants travel agencies and clothes shops is th result.

At the start of the decade, Barry Trovn and I wrote of the probability of riots in ou book, *Black Youth in Crisis*. After the 198 riots, I analysed the causes in *No Future* an came to the conclusion that there was mor to come. I still believe we are in the midst c the crisis. It is merely being contained thank to improved methods of police control. C gas and plastic bullets are presently at th ready and any future signs of disturbanc

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will be sharply dealt with. Yet the underlying conditions will remain – and, in all probability deteriorate. The crisis of which black youth are a centrepiece has not yet passed.

E Ellis Cashmore

● HOW SAFE IS AIR TRAVEL?

The Manchester air disaster, in which 54 people were burned or choked to death aboard a British Airtours' 737, has focused British public attention on the dangers of air travel. At the same time the intensity of international official concern has been increased by an horrific series of crashes and accidents around the world.

In many respects, this year is already the worst-ever in the history of civil aviation. During the first eight months, according to the Airclaims group, 1,221 people were killed in accidents involving Western-built jetliners. The worst full year to date was 1974 when 1,233 perished. The average number of deaths between 1975 and 1984 was 650.

If other categories of aircraft are included, 1985's death toll is much higher. So far, 281 have been killed in accidents involving turboprops; 96 in piston-engine aeroplanes; and an estimated 210 in Soviet-built jets. The Soviets do not release details of air crashes in the USSR.

In terms of the value of hulls lost, this year is undoubtedly out on its own. Including the Midway Express DC-9 which crashed on take-off in the US last month, Western-built jets worth over $330m have been destroyed in 1985. The previous worst-ever year was 1983 when losses totalled $302m for the full 12 months. These gloomy statistics have cast a dark shadow over the whole air transport industry. Not unnaturally this has led to widespread public fears that air travel is becoming very unsafe.

The well publicised increase in the number of aircraft hijackings, revelations of mechanical failure, and admissions of human error have combined to create the impression that travelling by air is a high-risk business. This impression is entirely false. This year notwithstanding, all the available data point to the fact that a jet aircraft is by far the safest means of transportation. Moreover, over the past two decades the trend has been towards more safety not less.

The big problem faced by international airlines is one of publicity. When a big jet goes down, it invariably involves great loss of life and the destruction of high value equipment, all of which – sad as it may be – makes a spectacular news story for press, TV and radio.

The coverage given to events such as the one at Manchester only serves to compound the instinctive, but unjustified, fears most of us have about the inherent dangers of flying. By contrast, little or nothing is ever heard in the national media about the 20 or so deaths which occur on British roads almost every day. Unless it's a motorway pile-up, Fleet Street does not want to know. Internationally, this disparity in the level of public interest is even more extreme. Who cares about the annual road deaths in Chile? But a 747 Jumbo jet ploughing into a mountain in Japan killing 500, that's a different matter.

Making proper comparisons between the safety level of jet travel and that of other forms of transport is difficult. But an examination of the numbers involved goes a long way to demonstrating just how remarkably safe flying is. Consider this year: one of the worst for civil aviation. Deaths from all types of commercial air transport worldwide so far total about 1,800. Yet around 2,500 were killed on the roads in Britain alone during the same period. Some 5,445 people were killed on the roads in Britain in 1983, the latest full year for which Department of Transport figures are available. In 1982, the total was 5,934, and in 1981 5,846.

By comparison, in 1984 only two people throughout the world were killed as a result of travelling in a Western-built jet. Indeed, last year only 224 people lost their lives in all forms of scheduled air services from a total of 832m passengers. That gives a scheduled airline fatality rate of 0.03 deaths per 100m passenger-miles flown. In Britain, during the last six months of 1983, there was an average of about 450 deaths per 100m vehicle-kilometres driven.

British aviation has a particularly good safety record. Until the accident at Manchester, there had not been a single fatality involving a jet operated by a UK airline since 1972 when a British European Airways' Trident crashed on take-off in London killing 118. The last time any type of British aircraft was involved in a fatal accident was over two years ago in July 1983 when one of British Airways' helicopters crashed into the sea off the Scillies killing 20. In the year 1984-85, British airports handled some 69m passengers, and over 1m take-offs and touchdowns almost without incident.

The last few weeks have been an exceptionally bad period for air transport. But there is no evidence to suggest that any of the disasters have been in any way related. They have involved different aircraft types, different engines and a range of airlines. Flying remains a very safe way to travel.

Jeff Randall

The suspect Pratt& Whitney JTD-9 engine.

● LABOUR NEW ZEALAND-STYLE

For a Labour prime minister, David Lange of New Zealand is a rather lucky man. No-one with a passing knowledge of the NZ Labour party, least of all Lange himself, would have been at all surprised if at this stage of its life, his government would have been in deep trouble. Since very nearly their first day in office, Lange and his ministers have been ladling out a mix of economic measures which are ideologically offensive to many in his party and just plain unpopular in the country at large.

Though the polls are still far from wonderful and the government did lose in July a bye-election seat Labour had held for 57 years, Lange's personal following remains impressive and his party surprisingly united behind him. In many respects, the NZ Labour party is both organisationally and politically very similar to its British counterpart. Created in 1916 by the country's leading trade union leaders, the party has been dedicated to achieving working class aims as articulated by the union movement. The party's ideological complexions are almost as varied as those of British Labour, although its extreme Left is probably not quite as hard as Mr

1 The research is financed by ESRC.

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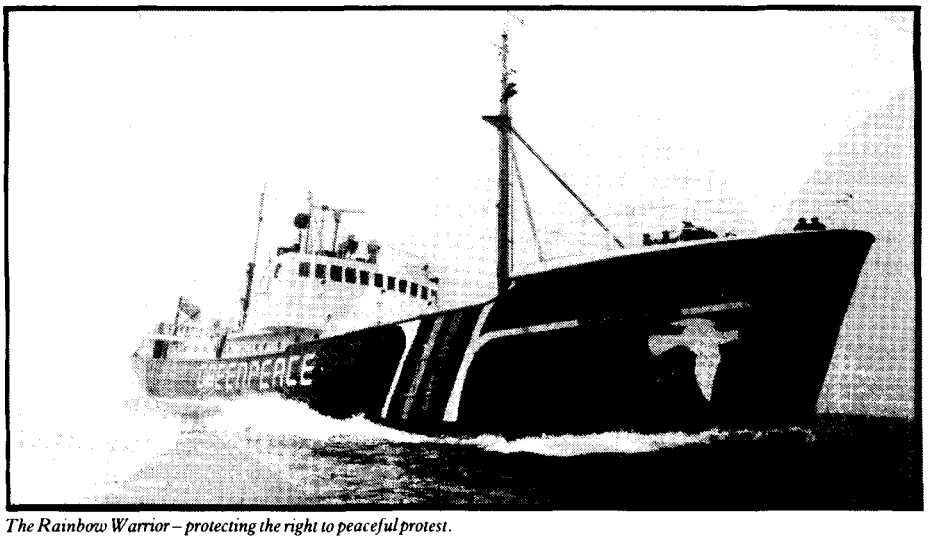
Kinnock's. It is, however, strongly mobilised on the soft 'moral' issues, particularly those flavoured with a dash of anti-Americanism. Since the July 1984 general election, Lange's good fortune has presented him with at least three political gifts which have distracted his party from the government's supply-side economic measures globally associated with the Centre-Right.

The first, of course, was the policy beloved of Labour's conference – a ban on entry into NZ ports of nuclear powered and nuclear armed ships. Though personally unenthusiastic, Lange knew the strength of his party's feeling on this issue and moved to apply the policy after a fashion as soon as he came into office. It looks as though the prime minister believed he could fudge the issue with both the Americans and his party by seeking the authority to allow US ships into NZ ports once he was satisfied by one means or another



The Rainbow Warrior – protecting the right to peaceful protest.

that they were not carrying nuclear weapons. The party wanted rather stronger guarantees than that, but the Americans settled the problem by refusing Lange any nods and winks as to whether ships would be nuclear armed.

Labour's anti-nuclear stand has broadly based support throughout the country because it derives less from a preoccupation with superpower relations, (and is, therefore, not seen as ideoogically tainted by the Right) and rather more from the threat to the environment posed by France's nuclear testing programme on the Mururoa atoll.

In the spring of this year, the party could again rally to the prime minister over his opposition to the proposed New Zealand rugby tour of South Africa which was eventually blocked by a court decision. Since July, the row with France over the sinking of Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior has been the third issue which Lange has been able to skilfully exploit to the immense pleasure of the party faithful.

The timing of the Rainbow Warrior affair was heaven sent for Lange because the party's grass roots in the urban working class was becoming extremely restive over falling living standards and the prospect of a further year of wage restraint. Lange's economic strategy has been largely devised by his finance minister, Roger Douglas, a wealthy self-made businessman who has been steadily dismantling a network of economic controls first put in place by a Labour government of the 1930s and then added to on a patchwork basis since the late 1970s by the National party government headed by Sir Robert Muldoon. Muldoon's policies, culminating in a series of wage-price freezes produced enormous distortions symbolised by huge budget deficits; huge balance of payments deficits and mushrooming foreign debt. Labour's market liberalisation measures have trebled inflation to around 15% while requiring moderation from wage earners. In July, Jim Anderton, a former Labour party president and leader of its left-wing, warned that 'the economic pain suffered for 8½ years under the previous National government can no longer be endured by those least able to bear it.'

While Anderton's growing challenge to economic strategy draws much support from the party's trade union wing, the Lange leadership still has enough backing from the constituencies to maintain the economic policies. The party's vigour derives strongly from successful membership recruitment drives over the past seven years which brought in a dreat deal of youthful new blood greatly disenchanted with Muldoon's opportunism. The party leadership in both the trade unions and the constituencies is dominated by well-educated men and women in their thirties and forties whose social democratic values are well attuned to their country's basic conservatism. This has tended to blunt ideological divisions among people who are not strongly ideological and to put at the top of their priorities the need to secure a second term for Labour at the next general election in 1987. For the moment, the party still seems to share Lange's view that its desire to improve social security and educational provisions can only be fulfilled by a reshaped and restructured economy which allows New Zealanders' entrepreneurial talents fuller expression.

John Wyles

● IS VAUXHALL BRITISH?

Shop stewards at Vauxhall are angry with the company's refusal to fulfil its promise to build more of its cars in the UK. This comes at a time when both Ford and General Motors (Vauxhall and Opel in Europe) are under attack in the press for their predatory pricing policies.

A recent report[1] by Dan Jones of the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University highlights the full extent of the problem. He raises the question of whether GM with an all-time low British content of 22% can truly be regarded as a British manufacturer despite still using the Vauxhall name.

The fall in local content has come about through the importation of cars and components from the European factories of both Ford and GM (and to a lesser extent Peugeot/Talbot). Ford Fiestas built in Spain and Vauxhall Cavaliers in Belgium are but two examples of cars indistinguishable from the British-made models. Purchasers are of course encouraged to believe that the majority of vehicles are of British origin. These 'tied imports' of completed cars and components for assembly when added together have risen from 4% to 31% over the last 10 years. Imported components alone account for the equivalent value of 150,000 additionally imported cars. The tendency to decrease UK content by increasing these so-called 'tied imports' from continental plants is also at the root of recent difficulties faced by the Austin Rover Group in its continuing struggle for survival.

The growing trend for GM to import both components and cars must be seen as part of its global strategy to overtake Ford in Europe and especially in Ford's largest European market, the UK. In the United

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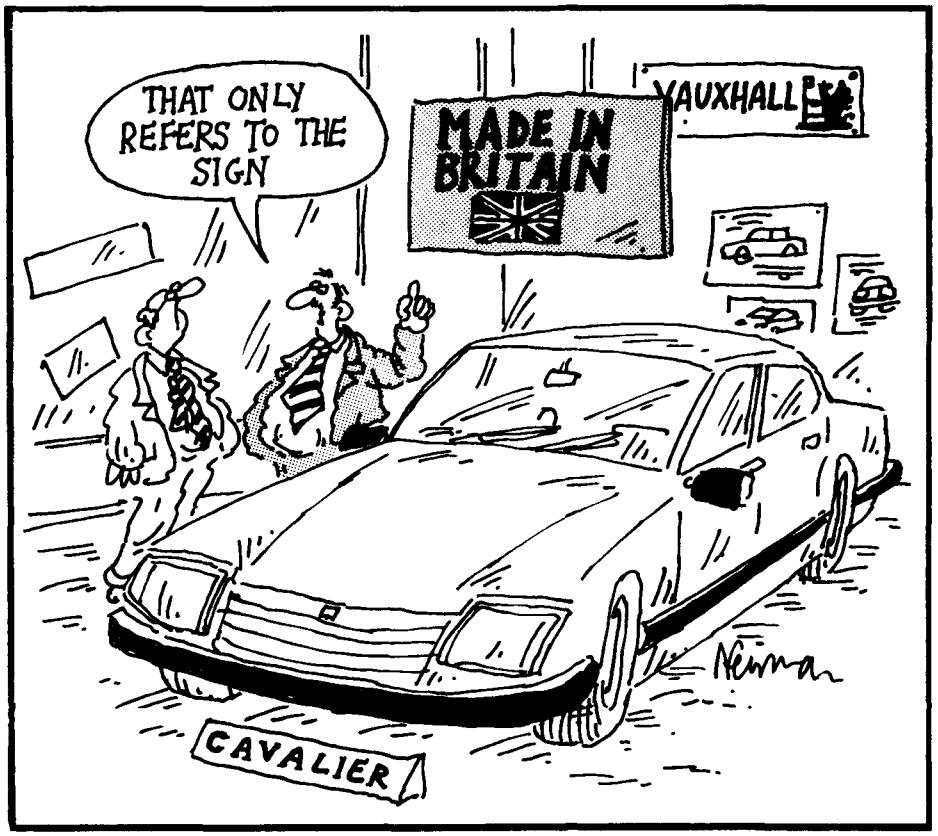
BRITISH CAR PRODUCTION AND MARKET, 1984

1984	UK Content of Cars Sold in UK %	UK Content of Cars Produced in UK %	UK Car Production	Market Share %
Austin Rover	92	92	371,400	17.8
Ford	49	80	273,800	27.8
Vauxhall (GM)	22	52	117,100	16.2

Source: as footnote.

States voluntary import restrictions directed at Japanese cars have allowed the two multinationals to reap huge profits, one estimate puts the figure at $20 billion, thus enabling GM in particular to finance massive discounts to buyers in Europe. This price battle is particularly fierce here in Britain and GM is faring well. It has recently doubled its market share to 17% entirely due to imports. During this period Austin Rover has found itself squeezed between the two giants and without access to multinational resources finds itself in an unequal struggle.

The effects on the British economy stretch further than the car industry. The trade deficit for automobiles in 1984 was a record £2.75 billion, dwarfing those of other manufacturing sectors. The multinationals are widely responsible for this growing trade deficit since 1980. The common assumption that the main threat comes from rising imports from the Japanese and European producers is a myth. Their import slice has levelled off from a high of 37% to its present 35%. Multinational producers, on the other hand, have switched from being net exporters of 200,000 vehicles in 1973 to net importers of 350,000 in 1984. All this is reflected in Britain's recent poor performance in automobile production. UK car production has fallen to 39% of the 1972 level, while at the same time component manufacture has dropped even further to 33%. Employment has similarly been affected. Since 1979 over 170,000 car workers have been made redundant, many as the result of tied imports from the multinational European factories. It is clear that if the trend is not reversed then many more thousands of jobs will be endangered and related industries condemned to closure.



Over 40% of UK buyers of new cars comprise company fleet users, local authorities, trade unions and government. Most have a policy of buying British. Whilst understandably purchasing from the cheapest sources, few buyers are conscious of the fact that when buying a Vauxhall 78% of the content is imported as against 51% for Ford and only 8% for Austin Rover.

In the face of these trends, of which until recently it has largely been ignorant, the Thatcher government needs to establish a clear understanding with both Ford and General Motors about future UK production levels, component sourcing and the necessity to reach a net trade balance. As an inducement to negotiate, the government should consider the options available when purchasing its own fleet vehicles, not least as Austin Rover now produce a full and competitive alternative model range.

Austin Rover would now be in profit, or at least break-even point, if it had not fallen victim to the fierce war between Ford and GM being orchestrated from the boardrooms of Detroit. Perhaps if the government had acted sooner by splitting public spending between Ford and Austin Rover, and eliminating Vauxhall until local content was substantially raised, then it would have guaranteed Austin Rover net profits by 1985. However, the government's obsession with 'non-intervention', and its inability to fully understand the impact of predatory pricing upon Austin Rover's recovery, have inevitably led to continual losses. These losses resulted in last June's protracted and damaging cabinet review of its five-year corporate plan, a review which raised major questions and doubts over future investment plans for the company. Eventually the government agreed to give the go-ahead to the plan, but if the latter is to succeed it needs to be complemented by government action to deal with import competition from GM in particular.

Andy Graves

1 *The Import Threat to the UK Car Industry* Daniel T Jones, Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex 1985.

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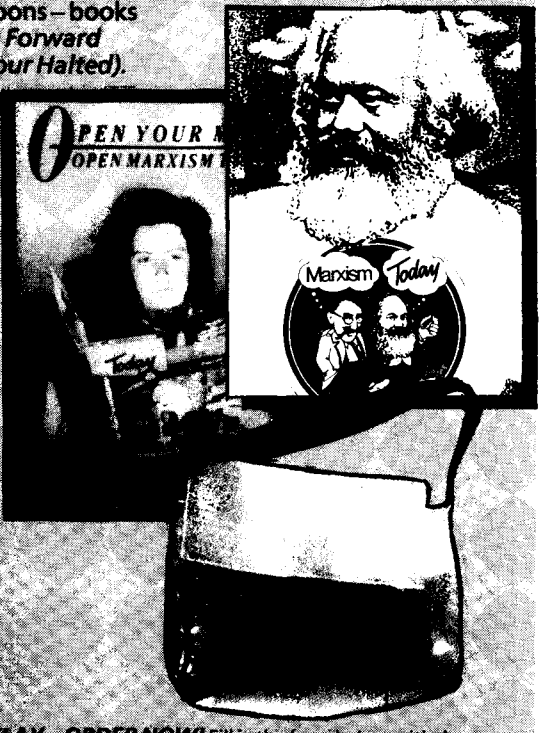

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Inock's Crusaders

The next election is now on the horizon. The new Labour leadership is two years old. What's it up to? Is it back to the 70s, or is it something new?

Beatrix Campbell

BY THE TIME we find ourselves contesting the next general election, the Left in particular and the labour movement in general will line up in a rather different formation from 1983.

There's a new generation of Labour and trade union leaders, for a start, whose reference points are not the same as those with which the labour movement fought and lost in 1983. The most dramatic change, however, has been the realignment in the Left of the Labour party, with the break-up of the previous coalition around Tony Benn.

What has emerged in 1985 is a sectarian alliance between Trotskyists, Bennites, fundamentalists within the trade union movement epitomised by Arthur Scargill and Ken Gill, and a sectarian minority in the Community party. If the three musketeers celebrated by the hard Left in 1984 were Benn, Scargill and Livingstone, they are now Benn, Scargill and Ted Knight.

Livingstone's reluctant disaffection symbolically marked the realignment of what is variously known as the democratic or participatory Left. But a chronicle of his personal shift is less significant than the emergence of a new grouping within the Left. It may not yet constitute an alliance, but it is slowly finding new confidantes among the Tribune group, Labour party libertarians like *The Chartist* and the old soft Left clustered around the Labour Co-ordinating Committee.

Tony Benn lamented last year that the inner party struggle within the Communist party was having a destabilising impact throughout the Left. He was right, not because the CP is particularly powerful, but because it is a condensation of all the crises and collisions within the labour movement. It has been a concentrated ideological core of the conflicts and realignments raging throughout the movement.

if the three musketeers celebrated by the hard Left in 1984 were Benn, Scargill and Livingstone, they are now Benn, Scargill and Ted Knight

Colonel Blimps

The new alignments within the Labour party are part of the same tendency, but while the conflicts in the Communist party have been taking a consistent form over the past 15 years, the preoccupations of the Labour party have been through two distinct phases. The first, after the election defeat of 1979, was concerned primarily with power – the relationship between the party and the parliamentary leadership. Before the defeat of 1983 the policies of the 1970s remained in place. It seemed as though all that had to be done was sit tight and wait for Thatcher to sink herself.

The second phase opened with the defeat of 1983 which shook many activists on the Left and forced a review of the sacred tablets of policy. For what was lacking was a world view that could redesign the political agenda and seize the initiative from Thatcherism for a new and popular socialism. Socialism was no more on the agenda in 1983 than it had been after the Labour leadership's capitulations of the 70s.

In the first term the problem wasn't represented as the success of Thatcherism, but the failure of Callaghan; he'd sinned against the god of the manifesto. During both phases the old hard Left simply could not contemplate the *politics* of the two election defeats and stamped its foot at the very idea that Thatcherism itself was worth talking about. This allowed itself to take no responsibility for *creating* politics. After 1983 the hard Left coalition around Tony Benn began to break up, and although the critics did not all necessarily agree about the Thatcherism thesis, they did begin to come together around the recognition that the party's politics, and its presentation, were part of the problem.

The hard Left relied on good old class hatred as the way forward. They appeared as the Colonel Blimps of the class war. The democratic Left realigned, however, around the imperative to find the initiative, create new constituencies and alliances, and engage with popular culture.

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For while the culture of common sense remained the territory of Thatcherism the Left had no anchor. It was almost as if the very word 'popular' caused a seizure on the hard Left, which promptly cried 'revisionism!' as it found itself isolated within the new formations of the Left. Indeed, it saw no need for political renewal because it was isolated from the class it claimed to represent, a class which remains disappointed and depoliticised, excluded from political engagement by its own party. The hard Left is hardly able to relate to anything other than the institutions of the labour movement. They live as if in a kind of political asylum.

Softly, softly

Meanwhile, while these ructions were happening within the Labour party, what was happening outside? The labour movement should have been shaping a new agenda. It perhaps thought it was doing exactly that with the miners' strike and the campaigns against rate-capping and abolition, and in a sense it was. But both struggles were started by Thatcher, both were defensive and despite their magic moments, both exposed the inertia of the 'official' labour movement. It was the unofficial networks that brought coal communities and rates to the high streets.

the hard Left relied on good old class hatred as the way forward

Only CND and the women's peace movement have scored palpable hits against the government and have succeeded in shifting consensus away from the Right. And in local government, only the ILEA managed to defeat the government on abolition, primarily because it had welded together a formidable alliance between the schools, the community and the authority.

Having said all this, something else has been afoot since 1983: the shadow cabinet and the TUC have been talking and working towards a new agenda for not only the 80s but the rest of the century. What they've come up with is a new document *A New Partnership, a New Britain*, an approach concerned with 'themes' rather than policies, a softly, softly strategy which is the complement of the new preoccupation with image and style characteristic of Kinnock.

This soft strategy, however, is incapable of reordering the political framework. It depends on the unpopularity of Thatcherism and it assumes that the Alliance won't gain as much as Labour from the Tories' demise. All the signs are, however, that the Alliance is gaining at least as much, if not more from Thatcher's treble troubles. The fact is that unless Labour changes the popular consensus, then it will remain the prisoner of Thatcherite consensus, vying with the Alliance for 'the middle ground'. *Plus ça change*. Moreover, Thatcher can still recover, and even if Labour could convert 35% or whatever of the poll into a parliamentary majority à la 1974, it would remain the prisoner of a narrow and unstable electoral base in a political environment still defined by Thatcherism.

But we shouldn't see the softly, softly strategy simply as the same old stuff, a regurgitation of the past. Something is changing. There isn't a retreat into the rhetoric of the 60s and 70s. New objectives are being formulated.

So, what is happening? An important change is the new relationship between the leaders, the policy-makers and the process of policy-making. It's different from the 70s when the parliamentary leadership abstained from the process and then abandoned the policies. The policies might be a bit more right-wing as a result of the parliamentary party's involvement, but there's a feeling at Labour's HQ, Walworth Road that if this is the price of unity then it's worth it – at least the leadership is committed to the policies. Further, for the time being at least, the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership has the support of most of the 'participatory Left' which has split from the Bennite coalition in the process of realignment. Indeed, the leadership at the moment enjoys, the hard Left excepted, almost consensual support. Part of the reason for this is the shock of the 1983 and a second term for Thatcherism, which has placed an absolute premium on unity, unlike the first term whose hallmark was inner-party power struggle.

Kinnock's leadership

The key shadow cabinet figures are probably Kinnock, Hattersley and Meacher. Kinnock's role is clearly to manage the party and represent it publicly. While he's managed to appear as a 'bit of a lad', what he hasn't managed to do yet is clean up the party and convert a moribund machine into a campaigning party. In a short space of time he has become a popular national figure, an able ambassador for the party. But he seems to see himself more like a prime minister in waiting, a boy statesman, than a political leader seeking to shape the force he represents and to rethink, remould the party project for the rest of the 20th century. The impression he gives at the moment is that he's leaving this task, by and large, to others. Before the realignment this might have been understandable, given his alienation from the Bennite coalition. But given the realignment he is no longer so vulnerable to attack from the Left. Strangely enough, although he listens to the Left, he still doesn't lead it.

The key policy-makers look like Hattersley and Meacher. Let's start with the Hattersley corner. What's not new is that Labour's shadow chancellor is of the Right. What is new is twofold. First, the Left has, as things stand, little to say. Second, the Right is committed to reform – they actually do want to change something. But what is missing is the ministerial flair, allied to the popular feel, which characterised Benn's role during the 70s, when he was perhaps at his best, and which saw him seeking to bend Whitehall's resources to the rank and file movement outside the corridors of power.

In the absence of an innovative Left, the economic sphere has been serviced by a new generation of advisers, a new Labourist intelligentsia unschooled in the buoyant language of socialism and solidarity. Their reference points, culturally, politically and economically are the recession of the 70s, not the economic boom and cultural volcano of the 60s. They've learned their politics in a cold climate.

Realism – plus a dash of innovation

That generation has known only permanent mass unemployment, it has watched the decline and fall of Labourism, the rise and rise of street chic, of women's expectations, they're keyboard kids and they're cool. Very cool, as it happens. They're the political pessimists – they only believe what they can see, they're not interested in rhetorical rubbish. It's not yet clear whether they have optimism of the will, but they've certainly got pessimism of the intellect. Sure, they're realists. That doesn't make them radicals, but it doesn't make them reactionaries either. Their problem is that their strongest reference points aren't yet the Left, a Left that can deliver.

Their politics aren't the politics of movement, of popular movements making politics outside the institutions. They were students when the student movement moved to the right – and so did they. But what completed the process was the elec-

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tion defeat of 1983 and the horrible discovery that not even the agony of Thatcherism could make old-style leftism popular. But before they're seen as baby-right-wingers, junior Peter Shores, smart little technocrats, it's worth reflecting on their admiration for the new municipal socialism. That enthusiasm is reflected in their policies. What was once a lonely idea, that local authorities should intervene in the local economy, has been tested, particularly by the soon-to-be abolished metropolitan authorities, and the lessons have been learned enthusiastically by the new boys. (Sad to say, it still is boys.)

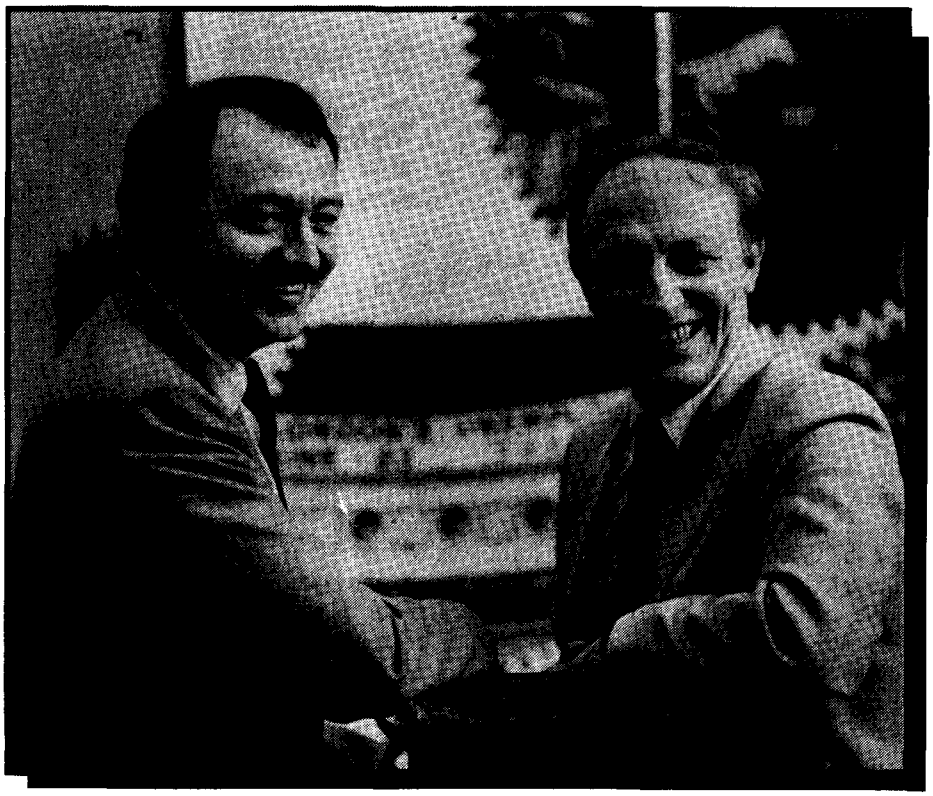
That experience forms the only innovative element in Hattersley's economic strategy. Local government enterprise boards on the one hand, and expert City counselling on the other have produced Hattersley's National Investment Bank. For the rest, his programme is a conventional job-creation programme, fuelled by public funds, and a second stage job-creation programme based on renewal of the infrastructure. The strength of the programme is that it is specific and limited, and within its own terms – and within the terms of the Thatcherite decade – radical. But where, we wonder, is there a new alternative economic strategy in all this?

The party's economic sphere is being managed by reformers rooted in a realism about the failures of industrial democracy, nationalisation and planning agreements in the 70s. They're not so much against these things as uninspired by them, partly because of the evidence of capital's resistance, and partly because of the evidence of the labour movement's indifference. The result: realism becomes pluralism; they're for anything that expands social ownership and control, from limited nationalisation to workers' co-ops. But in the absence of the evidence that anything's worked in the past that pluralism could be a euphemism for pessimism.

Interestingly enough, though, a strength of Hattersley is that insofar as he's coming up with something new, he has been prepared to learn from the municipal Left.

Reform without movement

In contrast, there's nothing energising him from the labour movement Left. This is a reflection of the malaise of the movement; it's bewildered, frightened and isolated. Unable to generate a social base for the kind of national mobilisation that is needed. A major era of reform requires resonance in a movement of the people for



The Dynamic Duo . . .

change. The last world war generated a sense of power in the people. Things had to change. There is now a mass experience of powerlessness and alienation from the processes of politics.

The shadow cabinet exist in this environment. They are, at least in a small way, the new 45ers, the new Fabians, concerned primarily with central government management of social and economic problems. But this time there's no popular crusade. And given Labourist culture, they don't even recognise its absence.

> they still don't do their own housework

The managerialism of the party and TUC in the 'partnership' document limits it to the responsibilities of government. It is not concerned with the responsibilities of the movement. Its unemployment strategy will do well to hold present unemployment figures at their current levels. But does that exhaust the movement's responsibility for engaging with and resourcing the unemployed?

Hattersley's reforming zeal seems to exhaust itself when it confronts the other preoccupation of the shadow cabinet: social policy. On economics he's a pessimist, on social policy he's a conservative. But this is true of many.

The new radicals

A curiosity about the new generation of Labour leaders is that with a few exceptions, although they've lived their adult lives in the era of feminism – their time, is after all, the time of the women's movement – they seem oddly exiled from its culture. They still don't do their own housework. Ken Livingstone is virtually alone among the men in admitting to oddly eclectic reading habits – Ursula Le Guin and Andrea Dworkin at least are on his bookshelves. But even he seems to think that occasional bouts of housework are something to boast about. His *compagnas*, like La Morrell, Ruddock and Richardson, wouldn't expect a round of applause for doing the washing. There is then, something sadly old fashioned about these men. And if their domestic habits haven't changed, so it seems their politics haven't either. But if the men haven't changed much the women have. What is new in the Labour Party of the 80s is the insurgence of the women who, because they have the culture of feminism as a reference point outside the party, challenge the ritualised parameters of Labourism like others don't.

The clash between patriarchal Labourism and these new progressives is noisiest around the cluster of committees set up by Michael Meacher on poverty, taxation and social security, and to respond to Norman Fowler's social security review.

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It's not surprising that this is where the collision of contending interests within the movement is happening – there's one woman on the TUC-Labour party liaison committee and Hattersley's economic committee meetings seem to be boys-only affairs.

The only room for manoeuvre for feminism in the shadow cabinet is on poverty and social security, not least because Meacher is drawing on the expertise of the poverty lobby – groups like Child Poverty Action and One Parent Families are run by women – and party feminists like Jo Richardson, Audrey Wise and Brenda Wilkinson, a representative from the women's organisation in the party.

Social policy promises to be by far and away the most innovative area of reform. Although the Meacher committees tend to shuffle along with the conventional categories already operating in taxation and benefits, they are also breaking with them the more they take on board the feminist framework – talking about poverty means talking about women.

The old language of poverty

Strange, then, that the other 'unreconstructed' bits of the party still talk about poverty in the 19th century language of philanthropy: compassion and caring. One of the participants in the discussions recalls that there's a new meaning to the old feeling that 'the poor will always be with us.' Only now it's women who'll always be with us. But that transition changes the meaning of our political vocabulary. What women want isn't compassion but change.

It's as if the presentation of policy is in a kind of time warp, too ready to hijack key words like 'caring' and 'compassion' without understanding that they are resonant when they criticise the Tories, but blank when they are used to characterise Labour's challenge. Firstly, 'caring' as a description of Labour's poverty policies still objectifies the poor, it makes them other, other than 'us', other than the government, it assumes their powerlessness and their exclusion from politics. Labour needs to do more than what the Tories don't do: show compassion. It needs to be a party *of* poor people, as well as *for* poor people. The vocabulary becomes even more problematic when it is used in relation to women, because it completely fails to clarify the causes of women's poverty – women are not poor in our society simply because of unemployment etc – their poverty is politically organised, women's poverty is an expression of the sexism of the wage system *and* the welfare system.

Participants in some of Meacher's think tanks nevertheless feel that a conherent assault on poverty has suffered not so much because he isn't sympathetic but because he himself, like many politicians, isn't involved in the process. 'Politicians aren't used to working in a process.' (Clare Short shows in the September issue of *New Socialist* how it is inimical to the parliamentary politician. You pop in at meetings, you never stay, and you don't share ideas because someone else will pinch them.) And real resistance has come from the Kinnock-Hattersley axis to one of the main objectives of the poverty committee: redistribution in favour of women.

It's an old story.

Radical redistribution

Before the last election, Eric Heffer, despite posing as a pro-feminist, tried to block the insertion in the manifesto of the case for transferring the married man's tax allowance to the child benefit, as a redistribution in favour of women, on the grounds that 'the lads won't stand for it.'

Some of the Labour party policy-makers are clearly still troubled by this commitment and it has come up in Meacher's

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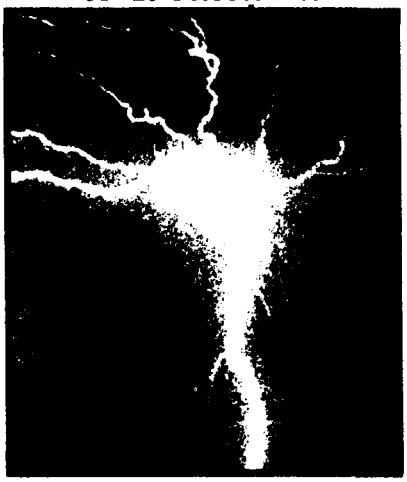

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committees, which seems to have experienced the heavy hand of Hattersley and the economists. Nevertheless the resistance had to back down in the face of formidable protagonists, particularly the feminists, although the Treasury lobby still seemed worried that if Hattersley was seen to be opposing the government's plan for tax relief for men that would be bad for Labour. 'Hattersley's very worried about the working class male,' recalled one of the participants in the debates. 'You'd expect our argument not to go down well among Tories, but it doesn't go down well among some men on our side either, because it's men's take-home pay you're talking about and there's a lot of political clout in political circles in that,' said another.

> the only room for manoeuvre for feminism in the shadow cabinet is on poverty and social security

What none of them seem to have registered is that while women may not have *organised* political clout, there's still an awful lot of women out there who vote and who haven't yet had the opportunity to vote for a party that's for them and that is prepared to 'take on the lads'. In other words, take responsibility for an economic and cultural revolution.

Despite the recidivists, the argument does seem to have been won and Meacher seems keen to support radical redistribution. At the moment there are discussions about a benefit for wageless women that would extend beyond the child benefit for mothers to *childless* women living in couples without a wage, probably in the form of a limited unemployment benefit.

The political significance of these measures is enormous, but because social security is about highly technical administrative arrangements and because they're about women, they haven't been translated into the language of popular politics.

But . . .

There are two sides to redistribution of incomes, however, and if Meacher and Jo Richardson promise radical reform on the social security side, the debate around the other side, wages, threatens to be as sterile as the 70s.

The labour movement has barely been involved in the debate. Papers have shuffled between Walworth Road and Congress House. General secretaries, never mind their unions, have hardly taken part in the conversation. They'll wear a non-statutory incomes policy, prioritising the low-paid, because they desperately want a Labour government. But it is an incomes policy that will be imposed on the movement, because it didn't come up with one of its own.

Hattersley is trying to sell a new social contract on the same terms as the 1974 social contract, only this time the No 1 priority is the unemployed and No 2 is 'fair pay' for the poor. But once again, it is as if the only thing the shadow cabinet feels able to police is pay.

The last social contract foundered on the rocks of the IMF and inflation on the one hand, and on the Thatcherism of 'the lads' on the other. It is nearly 10 years since the labour movement staked out its position on pay, when Right and Left spoke with one voice for the resumption of collective bargaining in order to restore differentials – a euphemism for inequality.

The trade union movement had the opportunity in the 70s to make collective bargaining match the 20th century realities of the labour market but it ran for cover. Most women work for a wage for most of their adult lives. They are breadwinners too. But they are also the poorest breadwinners. They are now recognised as the new poor and their own movement has negotiated their poverty. Collective bargaining has not yet modernised its concepts to match the facts of life in the late 20th century.

A final word

The important thing for the Left is that the debates in the Labour party should be taken for what they are, but because much of the Left is frozen in the framework of the 70s there's a danger that the reformism of Labour will be written off simply as rightism. The Labour government just might do something concrete about jobs, redistribution between classes, within the working class and between the sexes. It might also do something bold about housing, which hasn't been discussed here, and cruise missiles. A socialist agenda is almost inconceivable in the political conditions of the 80s, but a strong and sensitive intervention of the Left is imperative if Labour is to succeed where it failed in the 70s. As Tony Benn has reminded us, it wasn't that it was reformist, but that it failed to reform. It is already apparent that although the Labour leadership is leading from the Right, insofar as it is reformist at all, it is dependent on the initiatives of the Left. □

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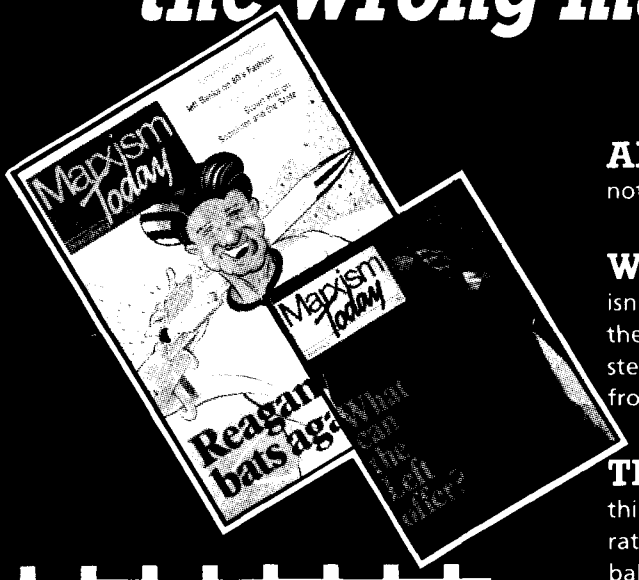

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In November the Vatican Council will be convened, just 20 years after the historic reforming council of Pope John. Will it represent a counter-revolution?

Holy Disorders: THE BATTLE FOR THE VATICAN'S SOUL

John Wilkins

TWENTY YEARS AGO, there was a revolution in the Catholic Church, caused by a saint whose name was Pope John XXIII. The story is told of how, when asked what he was trying to do, he went over to a window in the Vatican and threw it open. The tale is likely to be apocryphal – Pope John disliked draughts – but it remains a very good parable. To let in the fresh air, he called a council of all the bishops in the church. Vatican II, as it was called, met in four sessions between 1962 and 1965 and could prove as formative as the Council of Trent four centuries before it.

In those heady days of the council, in the early 1960s, the conservative agenda prepared by the papal civil service was thrown out by the bishops. They saw the church no longer as a perfect society, standing over and apart from the world, but as a pilgrim on the way. They declared that 'the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ'. And so, they said, 'this community realises that it is truly and intimately linked with mankind and his history'. It was the rediscovery of Christian humanism, and the end of the 'disapproving church' of the late 19th century – disapproval which had reached a high point with the Syllabus of Errors in 1864, when Pope Pius IX declared that it was no duty of the Roman pontiff to 'reconcile and harmonise himself with progress, with liberalism, and with recent civilisation'.

Signs of retrenchment?

Pope John XXIII's openness to all people of goodwill included the Communists. In his encyclical letter, *Pacem in Terris*, which was his dying bequest to the world, he wrote that: 'it is always perfectly justifiable to distinguish between error as such as the person who falls into error . . . Again it is perfectly legitimate to make a clear distinction between a false philosophy . . . and an economic, social, cultural and political programme, even when such a programme draws its origin and inspiration from that philosophy'. His enemies said that because of that passage, the Christian Democrats lost a million votes to the Communist party in the Italian election soon after the encyclical was published.

To adapt another simile of Pope John, it was as though the ship of the church had been lying in harbour and now was taken out onto the high seas. That is to exchange security for risk, and not all the sailors liked it. There are some people high in the Vatican today – notably Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the church's doctrinal watchdog body, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – who hold that the 20 years since the council have been an unmitigated disaster. Cardinal Ratzinger has spoken of a 'restoration' that is 'already underway'.

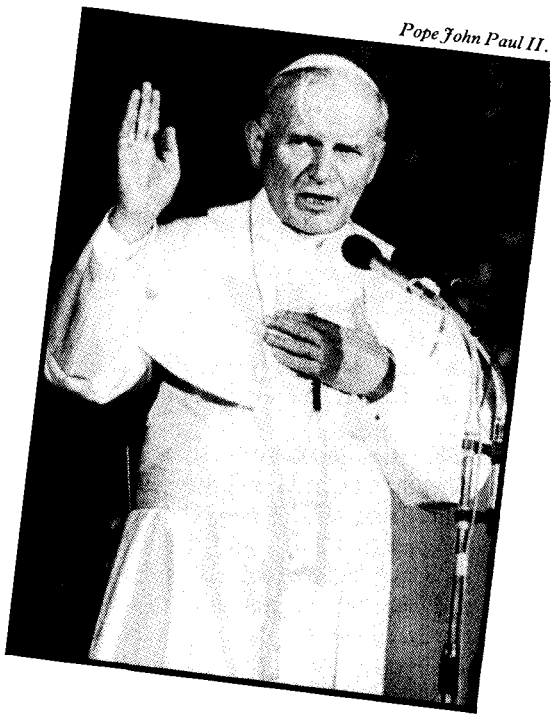
Now Pope John Paul II has called an extraordinary synod to review the council's work and determine the future direction of the Catholic Church. With his liking for symbolic acts, he announced this synod on the very day – January 25 – that Pope John XXIII in 1959 had revealed his plan to call the council. Does this mean that the Pope himself has decided on retrenchment?

There are certainly signs of it and already in 1982 the historian Paul Johnson, who would welcome such a development, hailed John Paul II as the Pope of 'the Catholic Restoration'. 'The era of experiment and doubt', declared Mr Johnson, 'is over. The era of certitude has recommenced.'

Pope John Paul II has never criticised Pope John XXIII, nor the work of the second Vatican council. Far from it. His references to the council have always been positive, and he has said that his primary duty as pope is to promote and fulfil its work.

Inevitably, however, the perspective looks different to a Catholic from Eastern Europe. The then Primate of Poland, Cardinal Wyszynski, told Pope John XXIII's successor, Paul VI, that the council could not be carried out in Poland. Such changes would be seen by the communist authorities as weakness: as beaches in the counter-reformation wall.

Pope John Paul II did not take that view, but he believes that his election as the first Pope from a communist country is providential. There is a mission which only he can perform.



Pope John Paul II.

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John Paul's perspective

Pope John Paul II's mother died when he was nine and his father when he was 21. He has something of the toughness of an orphan. As the first Slav pope, he could be said to fit the prophecy of the 19th-century Polish romantic poet Roman Slowacki:

> 'This Pope will not – Italian like – take fright at sabre thrust
> But brave as God himself, stand and give fight
> His world – but dust . . .
> Love he dispenses as great powers today
> Distribute arms: with sacramental power – his sole array – the world he charms'

It is a heroic conception of Christianity, and Pope John Paul II wants a church of heroes. The concerns of many in the Western church – contraception, married priests, a role for women in ministry – he scorns as suburban. What he is involved in is a battle between good and evil for the soul of the world. That cannot be won by half-heartedness or division. Part of this heroic role, therefore, is to purify the Catholic Church itself so that it becomes like a disciplined army. He is of the stuff of which martyrs are made, and that is the sort of Christianity which he wants.

The cutting edge of the Pope's message is based on his doctrine of human rights, which arises from a metaphysical doctrine of the absolute value of every human being. 'I believe in you', he told the crowds during his visit to Britain. 'I believe in the unique dignity of every human being. I believe that every individual has a value that can never be ignored or taken away.'

This is the doctrine that he has proclaimed in East and West, to communists and capitalists, to believer and non-believer alike. Reiterated in Poland during the Pope's first return visit to his homeland, that message was one of the influences that prepared the ground for the emergence of the first independent trade union in the communist bloc, Solidarity.

This is what he wants the church to preach. He went to Central America at the risk of his life to tell them there that they had no need of any other tools of change than those in their own tradition.

Liberation theology

They had no need, in other words, of the other sort of liberation theology, developed in Latin America since Vatican II, which believes that sin can be political and can be due not only to individual transgression but to unjust structures, which takes 'the option for the poor', and which makes use of marxist concepts to analyse society. The running battle inside the church about the legitimacy of this theology continues, and the subject will no doubt be raised in Rome in November.

It is not a question here of dealing with isolated theologians, but with whole churches. At Medellin in 1968 and at Puebla in 1979, the Roman Catholic bishops of Latin America as a body pledged themselves to the 'option for the poor'. Salvation should be translated by liberation, they said. There are some exponents of liberation theology in Latin America who present Jesus as a sort of urban guerrilla, and who admire priests like Camillo Torres who have taken up arms and died with them in their hands. The critics make telling use of such examples, accusing the liberation theologians of importing marxist class war into

Pope John Paul II . . . believes that his election as the first Pope from a communist country is providential

Christianity and committing the church to violence. But there is a theology of the just revolution, going back very far, and Paul VI himself alluded to it. What liberation theology is concerned about is creation, and the place of human people within creation, and the spiritual practice which is encumbent on them; and the fact that Rome cannot ignore is that under its influence a Roman Catholic Church that was previously allied everywhere in Latin America with the forces of the powerful – the state and the army – has in the last 20 years ranged itself on the side of the oppressed.

But all the evidence is that the Pope remains diametrically opposed to this liberation theology. He has not accepted the argument, put forward at one stage by the Jesuits among others, that some marxist analysis can be a useful tool. He believes that marxism leads only one way, and he knows the destination from experience. He is not going to have his theologians in Latin America tainted with the doctrine against which he has fought in Poland.

The actions taken by Rome against the four priests in the revolutionary government of Nicaragua is eloquent. When the Pope came there in 1983, on one of his least successful visits to any country, he wagged an admonitory finger at Fr Ernesto Cardenal, Minister of Culture. All four priests subsequently had to choose between their ministry and their government posts. One of them, the Jesuit Fernando Cardenal, brother of Ernesto, published a *Letter to My Friend* in which he spoke of an agonising choice between the 'two loves of my life' – the church and the revolution.

Divisions in the Vatican

He accepted that priests ought not normally to take political office, but Nicaragua was an exception, and he noted that the Jesuits both within Nicaragua and outside had respected the position which he had taken up in conscience. It was not they but the Pope who had forced the issue: 'the one who has categorically refused to grant an exception to the priests in Nicaragua so that they might continue working in the revolutionary government is Pope John Paul II. It hurts me to say this, but as a Christian I cannot keep quiet'. Forced to choose between his commitment to the revolution and being expelled from the Society of Jesus, he had concluded that: 'I would be committing a serious sin if in the present circumstances I were to abandon my option for the poor which is at present being made concrete in Nicaragua through work in the Sandinista people's revolution.'

In September 1984 Cardinal Ratzinger's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an 'instruction on certain aspects of liberation theology'. Liberation was a Christian theme, said the instruction, but marxist analysis had no part to play in it. Christian theologians who thought otherwise involved themselves in 'terrible contradictions'.

Some liberation theologians are indeed naive in their assessment of the situation in the Eastern bloc, but none of them consider the Soviet Union a model to be followed. Disregarding such distinctions, the instruction declared that 'all those who would sincerely work for the true liberation of their brothers' ought to contemplate 'a major fact of our time' – that 'millions of our own contemporaries

Pope John Paul II wants a church of heroes

legitimately yearn to recover those basic freedoms of which they were deprived by totalitarian and atheistic regimes which came to power by violence and revolutionary means, precisely in the name of the

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liberation of the people. This shame of our time cannot be ignored'. It was that last phrase that caused the Secretary of State – the Vatican's foreign secretary – Cardinal Casaroli, to distance himself

There are some exponents of liberation theology in Latin America who present Jesus as a sort of urban guerrilla

publicly from the Vatican instruction. A diplomat in the spirit of Vatican II, he has been in charge of the Vatican's *Ostpolitik*, and his negotiations with communist governments would be impossible if such an attitude to them were the basis of his approach.

Open dissension of that sort between top cardinals in the papal civil service is rare. But whatever Cardinal Casaroli may think, it is Cardinal Ratzinger more than anyone who is likely to have had a major hand in preparing the agenda for November's synod.

The Cardinal is extraordinarily ready to publicise his views. Last November he gave a lengthy interview to an Italian journalist which has now appeared in book form under the title, *Rapporto sulla Fede* ('Report on the Faith'). Wherever he looks in the church, the Cardinal sees crisis and degeneration. Self-criticism has become 'self-destruction'. There is 'manifold collapse'. He wants a 'new balance'. It is time to recover from the 'scandalous optimism' of the 60s.

The cardinal speaks only for himself and Pope John Paul II has hinted as much, but to believe that his words have no more significance than that would be about as naive as to accept Leon Brittan's suggestion that in writing to the BBC he acted as a private citizen. Moreover, it is inconceivable that Cardinal Ratzinger could hold the post he does and speak in the way that he does unless his views found at least some echo in the mind of the Pope.

The Pope's record

The record proves it. There is no reflection today of the anguished papacy of Paul VI, who steered the council through its last three sessions and then, decree by decree, patiently gave effect to the changes. Lamenting the haemorrhage of manpower as priests, unable to cope with their new identity, resigned in thousands, Paul VI once spoke of his 'crown of thorns'. On another occasion, surveying the unbelief with which the church had to dialogue – the new approach enshrining Vatican II's policy of openness – he wondered aloud whether Christianity would survive.

Such a thought has never crossed the mind of John Paul II. Slowacki correctly foretold:

> 'This Pope will not – Italian like – take fright at sabre thrust
> But brave as God himself, stand and give fight.'

As he set about showing the Catholic Church to the world as never before, Pope John Paul II's watchword for the church itself was unity. The loyal opposition which had claimed its rights of conscience under Paul VI was soon beleaguered. Dissident theologians like Hans Küng were ruthlessly disciplined. The Jesuits

Nuns waiting to hear Pope John Paul – Papal Mass, Cardiff, July 1982.

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had the Pope's own representative imposed on them. Paul VI's encyclical *Humane Vitae* banning artificial means of birth control, which split the church when it was issued in 1968, was confirmed in such uncompromising terms as to suggest that those who did not accept it were refusing to let God be God. The bishops of the experimental Dutch Church were summoned to Rome and told to go home and put their house in order. Dispensations from the priesthood virtually stopped. In Washington Sister Teresa Kane pleaded for women to have a place 'in all ministries of our church': the Pope appeared not to hear. A pattern emerged of conservative appointments to key episcopal sees. So to that extent at least Ratzinger's call for restoration, which he says is under way, is in line with present papal policy. However, there is more than this at stake.

In the month before the synod meets, a book by a Uruguayan Jesuit, Juan Segundo, is due to deliver 'a response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a warning to the whole church'. Its main title is *Theology and the Church*, and its argument is that the instruction on liberation theology issued by Cardinal Ratzinger's congregation contains an attempt to undermine the theological foundations of Vatican II. Fr Segundo confronts the implications squarely, as a liberation theologian himself. 'Let me make it perfectly clear: I understand that my theology (that is, my interpretation of Christian faith) is false if the theology of the document is true'.

He accuses the instruction of trying to separate the spiritual and the material, which in the perspective of Vatican II were held together. Paul VI, he says, correctly foresaw that at a later date Vatican II might be attacked for having deviated towards accepting the radically human positions of modern culture. In opening its arms to the world, the critics say, the church let the world in too much. The world must be pushed out again. But when he closed the council, Paul VI said that it was not a question of deviation, but of turning; and had remarked that the council directly affirmed and upheld 'the intimate union . . . that exists between human . . . values and properly spiritual . . . values'.

The heart of the battle

This is where the heart of the battle is. Cardinal Ratzinger admits that there is a crisis of faith; yet what he talks about is only the crisis of the church. His prescription for a cure is a reapplication of hierarchical discipline. His church seems almost to exist in a vacuum: the world does not enter it. That is why he likes the pre-council description of the church as 'the mystical body of Christ' and hates the council's more democratic and biblical image of 'the people of God'. The Catholics who see themselves as pilgrims on the way, searching with all men of goodwill, are dismissed with withering scorn as impetuous and secularised left-wingers who see the church as a merely human organisation. He has time only for those lay organisations which have been comparatively unaffected by the council, such as Opus Dei. And Opus Dei also has the Pope's favour.

Juan Segundo's own conclusion is that 'the implementation of the council has not gone too far: on the contrary, it has been blocked midway in its journey'. In Rome this November the clash will be between those who want to go further, those who want to stay halfway, and those who want to go back.

It is impossible to predict the outcome. Where Vatican II lasted four years after three years' preparation, the Extraordinary Synod in Rome will have less than two weeks to run after only ten months' notice. And Pope John Paul II has a way of riding over synods, as he rode over the bishops' suggestions at the Synod on the Family in 1980. He repeats continually Vatican II's central teaching that the Pope and bishops form a 'college' which has supreme power, but he brings to it his own interpretation: whereas for Vatican II the emphasis was on the team, the emphasis for him is on the captain.

> wherever he looks in the church, the cardinal sees crisis and degeneration

The bishops of England and Wales, in their submission to Rome in preparation for the extraordinary synod, took the opposite line to Cardinal Ratzinger. Openness was reaffirmed and the undoubted crisis ascribed to 'reasons quite beyond the changes attributable to the council'. In code – but a code easy to read – they pleaded also for some revision of the papal style.

There can be no restoration. It will not work. The genie cannot be put back into the bottle. The real reason for the difficulties experienced by the church since Vatican II is that the gulf which has opened up between the church and the world is such that it would take more than one council to bridge it. The church has to go further if it is to overcome the legacy of its disapproval which meant that the modern world was made by others – Freud, Einstein, Marx.

The council has not failed the church, according to the bishops of England and Wales, but the church has failed the council in ways that can be identified and corrected. If the synod in November does that, it will leave the Catholic Church in a stronger position. But if the synod puts the clock back, there will be a new crisis, until it is turned forward again. □

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M3

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The recent government reshuffle was far from a purge. The future of radical Thatcherism is at stake . . .

SOFT BLUE SHUFFLE

Andrew Gamble

THE ONLY THING the press could find to speculate about in advance of the recent cabinet reshuffle was whether the prime minister would override the opposition of her advisers, brave the rumoured displeasure of her constituency chairmen and invite Cecil Parkinson back into the cabinet. The Tory tabloids urged her to do so. The great communicator should not be left to languish on a Caribbean island but should return to link arms with the other champions of the new Conservatism, Norman Tebbit, Keith Joseph, Nigel Lawson and David Young, to renew the government's radical purpose and help win a third term of office.

The return of Cecil Parkinson was clearly in the best interests of the prime minister. She has all too few senior ministers on whom she can rely and whom she trusts. Yet it was judged not to be in the interests of the party she leads, and Thatcher in the end reluctantly accepted the advice. Parkinson it seems must wait until after the next election, and perhaps for ever.

But although Thatcher conceded on this issue, there was no way she could be deflected from giving the key role of party chairman to her other great political friend, Norman Tebbit. His elevation was well leaked in advance along with the identity of the main ministers to be dropped – Peter Rees as chief secretary to the Treasury, and Patrick Jenkin (Environment). They were given plenty of time to prepare their letters of resignation. Peter Rees was said to have 'lost the confidence' of the chancellor, Nigel Lawson, and was replaced by John MacGregor. The rather larger loss of confidence in the abilities of the chancellor during the last 12 months went unpunished. Patrick Jenkin, a former chief secretary, and once tipped as a future chancellor, was blamed for being a poor communicator and losing the propaganda battle on ratecapping and the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan counties. But Dr Goebbels might have been hard pressed to present these policies in a good light.

The decision to keep Parkinson out seems to have been delayed to the last minute. Further changes then became necessary, but there was no time for them to be leaked. A safe pair of hands was needed at the Department of Trade and Industry which Tebbit was vacating. This may have been the main reason for switching Leon Brittan, rather than because of what the *Financial Times* described as his 'less than total mastery' of the Home Office. The prime minister is extremely anxious to keep what she regards as the key ministries in the hands of her political friends. Her problem is that she is rather short of reliable friends.

The press interpreted Douglas Hurd's elevation to the Home Office as a great promotion and as indicating yet again the low priority Thatcher places on Northern Ireland affairs. But it also indicates what a low priority Thatcher places on the Home Office in comparison with the economic ministries. Despite her occasional outbursts on issues of social order, most

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recently and memorably on football hooligans, there is no programme for upholding social order comparable to the programme for managing the economy. She has allowed several of the key posts in this area to be filled by non-Thatcherites. Despite press campaigns for Tebbit to become Home Secretary, Thatcher has always avoided putting a hardliner in the Home Office. Douglas Hurd's appointment ensures that there will be a traditional Tory approach to relations with the BBC, race relations, and crime and punishment. The law and order card has been effectively dropped as far as the next election is concerned.

Maintaining the broad balance

The reshuffle may turn out to be more important for the changes Thatcher failed to make rather than for those she did. Peter Walker remained incarcerated at the Department of Energy, Keith Joseph at Education, and Nigel Lawson at the Treasury. Critics were swift to point out that the changes meant no change in the central direction of economic policy. Mid-term reshuffles, most famously Harold Macmillan's in 1962, have sometimes signalled a major shift in policy. Thatcher's reshuffles have all been aimed at reaffirming the government's commitment to its central economic strategy. The reshuffles in 1981 and 1983 saw the dismissal or demotion of most of the leading critics within the cabinet. The 1985 reshuffle saw no similar purge. Indeed the political opponents of the prime minister in the cabinet have been strengthened by the arrival of Kenneth Baker and Kenneth Clarke and the rise of Douglas Hurd.

Although Thatcher has been able to isolate and drive from office most of the Tory leadership she inherited from Heath, it is a mark of how far the present government and the Conservative party still is from being Thatcherite that even now after six years as prime minister she still has to be careful to maintain a broad balance between the different tendencies within the party. But it is also entirely typical that those who are not reliably 'one of us' have been kept away from the ministries deemed central to the successful pursuit and presentation of the economic strategy. The Department of Employment is a partial exception, but the appointment of Kenneth Clarke has been balanced by making Lord Young the head of the revamped department, now intended to spearhead the supply side policies which will be credited with any fall in unemployment occurring before the next election.

Determining the shape and scope of this reshuffle cannot have been easy for the prime minister. She was beset by several conflicting pressures. Uppermost in her mind will have been the electoral problem. Since February and the end of the miners' strike the government's popularity has declined sharply. After the stable plateau of support achieved between 1982 and 1984 of 40%, the government's opinion poll rating has fallen into a trough of 30%. Conservative seats have become vulnerable again at byelections, and the party is naturally restive. There have been many expressions of opposition and dissatisfaction with the leadership, and although organised groups like Centre Forward have not been a great success, there is now a substantial body of opinion in the party pressing for change in some of the key policies so as to restore the government's popularity before the next election. The political perception of unemployment has changed and many Conservatives now think it too risky to fight another election with 3m unemployed. The government would be vulnerable to the query – surely your policies should have started to work by now?

> Thatcher's dream of a party, a cabinet, a civil service, even a BBC, full of Thatcherites

The government must first rebuild the morale of its own supporters if it is to have a chance of winning back the wider electoral support that alone can make a third consecutive Conservative election victory a possibility. But this task is made more difficult by the presence of the Alliance and its appeal to disaffected Tory voters in the south, and by the revival of support for Labour. In 1983 the Tories benefited enormously from the three-way split in the popular vote. But in 1987/8 they could be the victims of it. A fragmented opposition is only valuable if the fragments do not grow larger than the governing party. The need to contain the Alliance threat is therefore urgent, but the wing of the party most likely to win back Alliance support is the Tory wets. The more Thatcherite the party appears the more opportunity it will give to the Alliance to win over a large part of the Conservative vote.

The Tory wets

Faced by this problem most previous Conservative prime ministers would have known what to do. As Trollope once observed of the Tories, in the refreshing waters of office any pill can be swallowed. A reconstruction of the government to signal that 'monetarism' was now abandoned, the need for reflation accepted, and that a major drive to reduce unemployment was under way, would stand an excellent chance of maintaining the Tories' grip on government.

This option has never been seriously entertained by Mrs Thatcher. As important as rebuilding electoral support for the Conservatives in her eyes is maintaining the kind of Conservative government that has existed during the last six years. The Thatcherites have been seeking to change

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the terms of the political debate, to challenge the accepted definition of what is politically impossible, to overturn many of the assumptions behind the policies of both Labour and Conservative governments. In the process the Conservatives have had to become a more ideological party. In choosing her ministers Thatcher has been anxious while not taking too many risks with party unity to advance those in the party in general agreement with her political strategy.

Thatcher's dream of a party, a cabinet, a civil service, even a BBC, full of Thatcherites, is a long way short of fulfilment. It is continually upset by the need to consider the electoral interests of the party and also by the shortage of competent Thatcherites. Thatcher has subdued and dominated the opposition in the party to her leadership and her policies, but she has not destroyed it. The Thatcher leadership can still at times appear isolated within the party; the policy and the strategy are still on trial.

A major defeat at the next general election would probably mean both the end of Thatcher's leadership and more importantly the capture of the leadership by her political enemies. This fragility of Thatcherism is surprising after all the struggles and victories of the last seven years. Arch-Thatcherites show a disturbing tendency to drift back to the broad centre of the party and become consolidators like John Biffen, or proponents of the middle way, like Nigel Lawson. Even Norman Tebbit has begun claiming the mantle of Iain Macleod. At this rate even the Earl of Stockton and Walter Monckton will soon have to be rehabilitated. Only Mrs Thatcher herself seems immune to this contagion.

Radical Thatcherism

However much she reshuffles her ministers, Thatcher has found it hard to keep majority support in cabinet for further doses of radical Thatcherism. In this latest reshuffle she seems to have given up the attempt. With the promotion to the cabinet of prominent wets like Kenneth Baker and Kenneth Clarke, the nominal balance of the cabinet may not have been altered much, but the future shape of the Conservative leadership may well have been. Six years into a Thatcher government and the rising stars of the Tory party clearly belong to 'them'. Thatcher's problem is that too many of her ministers appear to be dependent on her political favour. Too few are in the cabinet because she cannot afford to keep them out.

The great secret of Tory party success is that the party is organised to win elections and its leaders have rarely confused the activity of governing with the activity of securing electoral majorities. This is what makes the party so formidable. No other party entrusts a senior cabinet minister with the job of winning the next election. The opposition to Thatcher within the Conservative establishment stemmed from the fear that she either did not understand or was prepared to ignore some of the basic rules of Tory statecraft. Her electoral triumphs in 1979 and 1983 allowed her to disregard her critics, and convinced her that her political strategy was the correct one. In this way she is different from most previous Conservative leaders. She is aware of the overriding need to improve the party's electoral standing, but she is extremely reluctant to do this by giving up the ground which she believes has been won. She realises however that on a number of issues the government has been losing the political argument and its reputation as a competent administration.

on a number of issues the government has been losing the political argument and its reputation as a competent administration

The government's position is different from 1981. Then government unpopularity was due to the spectacular collapse of output and employment and the perception that the government was not in control of events. The present position is different. The unpopularity of the government stems from the accumulation of resentments, and from boredom with the faces and the policies of the present incumbents. The government's position is hardly irreversible. It is only marginally behind in the polls and it has two years to recover. But its victory would be more certain if Thatcher had not made it clear that she is only interested in winning on her terms. If her only concern had been winning the next election, she would not have chosen Norman Tebbit as party chairman, she would have sacked Nigel Lawson and she might have tried to bring Francis Pym and Jim Prior back into the cabinet.

Tebbit's appointment is a signal that Thatcher is trusting to him to conjure an election victory which would then enhance his claims to succeed her as leader. No party chairman has become party leader since Neville Chamberlain, although the post has been held among others by Woolton, Hailsham, Butler, Macleod, Barber and Thorneycroft. Tebbit is sure to rally the party, but the risk is that he will lose more votes than he gains for the Conservatives in the country. To help him prove his critics wrong two major tax-cutting budgets and a substantial reflation of the economy are now planned. The goal of zero inflation has been postponed for a little longer. The government is hoping desperately that unemployment will at last come down. It knows that it could not survive any new downturn in the economy.

The reshuffle is an attempt both to equip the government with the ministers most likely to win the next election for the Conservatives, but at the same time to hold the line for radical Thatcherism both in the party and in the government. If the government wins through and is re-elected, Thatcher wants to be sure that the credit goes to her policies and her political friends. This is high stakes statecraft once again. At stake is the future of Thatcherism as the dominant tendency in the Conservative party. □

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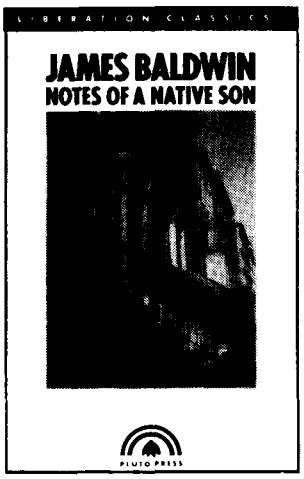

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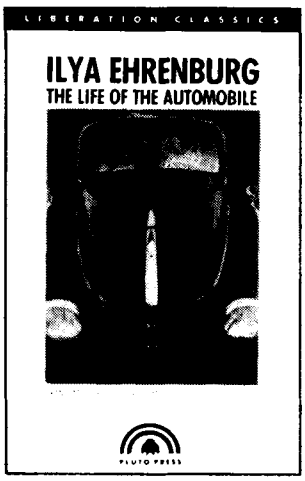

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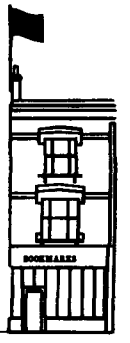

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Interview with Roy Hattersley

by Sam Aaronovitch and John Grahl

In your speeches you have been arguing the need for new economic policies for the Labour party. What is and was wrong, in your view, with the policies already put forward by the Labour party, for instance those on economic planning and industrial democracy presented jointly by the Labour party and the TUC?

If you ask me about those two specifically, I think there's very little wrong with either of them. I enthusiastically supported the joint document on industrial democracy and economic planning. It seemed to me that was the basis of a socialist economic policy. I hold the view very strongly that a socialist economic policy is about the structure of the economy and power within it. It is not about the demand management of the economy. Now, more generally, what were the main problems with our economic policy? What we proposed before the last election on how to put Britain back to work was a massive increase in generally undirected demand, and we talked about it in terms which left some of the areas at best open to discussion, and at worst with no policy to meet the actual needs. An increase in demand plus depreciation would not have achieved the aim that we hoped for. And because of that, because the British public is not as naive as politicians sometimes think, it was an incredible economic policy. The idea that we could spend and depreciate, and that would put our problem right politically as well as economically was a mistake. Now what we've done is to try to give them more force, more direction and more precision. I'll give you an obvious example. We obviously still believe there's got to be an injection of demand into the economy. We talked about a £5 billion boost at the last budget. But now we are trying to describe where it will go, how it will be spent, so it keeps job creation here in Britain rather than exporting it to Japan. It's that sort of difference. But I've always said that we were building on the old policies rather than reversing them.

But in the economic planning and industrial democracy document, there are specific points, for example on planning agreements, which are not discussed in your speeches as far as I am aware...

You must not believe that everything I think about economic policy has been said in the last two years. I am a supporter of planning agreements. I am certainly of the belief that if we are going to give more power to workers, which is essential, it's a canon of my sort of socialism, then they have to be provided with the information that enables them to use that power sensibly. If you ask me if I want to see planning agreements, my answer is yes. My objection to planning agreements under previous Labour governments is that we've talked as if by introducing planning agreements we are going to revitalise the economy and bring socialism overnight. We've grotesquely overstated the importance of planning agreements. I'm very much in favour of them but I'm in favour of keeping them in proper perspective.

A criticism that could be made of your proposals so far is that you are offering everybody omelettes without breaking any eggs. There's going to be something for everybody, but no-one will make any sacrifices. It could sound like a very populist presentation designed to deal with the current political problems faced by the labour movement and the Labour party.

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I don't underrate the importance of making the Labour party popular – as distinct from populist. My entire life in the Labour party has convinced me that we ought not to be a socialist Sunday school, or a sixth form debating society. Our object is to become the government of the country. And therefore I'm very sceptical about people who say, 'you're only doing this to win votes'. Therefore I don't for a moment step back from the allegation or compliment, or whatever you care to call it. I want to make the Labour party the head of a great national consensus which produces a majority government. But here I always distinguish between two clichés. Creating a consensus is not the same as occupying the middle ground. We have to produce a policy which is both socialist and likely to attract a majority vote, as I think Attlee did in 1945. Having said that, I don't think it's remotely right that I haven't faced the penalties of the sort of policy I want to see. The word penalties very often appears in my speeches, for example the need to tax people at the top end of the scale more. And I think that's politically necessary. These days nobody believes in omelettes without eggs. You get more political support if you say 'we are going to do all these things and they're good, but there is a balance of disadvantage'. And I do try to describe the disadvantages.

You have defined a number of priorities for a Labour government to tackle – a reduction in unemployment, modernising the economy, reducing inequality and tackling poverty, and the extension of democracy in every sphere. Is that an acceptable...

I think you mix there the ultimate objectives with the immediate policy. I believe that socialism is essentially about freedom, and the only way we can become genuinely free is to become more equal. The material equality which I want to promote is a means to allowing more people to have freedom, which is the ultimate object of a socialist society. I would like to see us measure all our policies against that aim. I'm writing a book which says that what's been wrong with the Labour party in the recent past is that we've never defined what our aim is. Pragmatism has become a major socialist virtue. Yet it hasn't prevented us from receiving all the assaults which pragmatism was supposed to protect us from, and it's stopped us from measuring our policies against anything worthwhile. Equality and freedom – two things which I don't think can be distinguished – are the ultimate aim of my socialism. A reduction in unemployment, while that is the first essential step to making us a slightly more equal society, since unemployment produces the most desperate poverty and bequeaths it to future generations, must be seen as part of the ultimate objective.

What would be your way of reducing unemployment as a Labour chancellor?

A substantial increase in demand will be inserted into the economy. But it has to be directed in such a way that the multiplier which we all learned about 30 years ago doesn't operate in Tokyo and Stockholm more than it does in Birmingham and south Wales. Therefore we'll direct the new spending power in three phases. The first, because it's the quickest, is the job-creation measures. I have to tell you that I personally am extremely sceptical about such measures because I believe we are much better served by genuine jobs. We'll try and make sure that direct job creation is as much related to real jobs as possible.

The second phase is public investment in the infrastructure and the captital sector. Now, we'll do our best to get that working quickly as well. I propose to tell local authorities that they'd better start preparing for this in anticipation of a Labour government. They'd better start deciding what it is they want to build, and who's going to build it, because when I'm chancellor I'll have somebody who goes to Birmingham, Sheffield and Leeds saying 'we'll provide you with money quickly if you can ensure that there are jobs waiting to be done as long as the money is there'. While all that's going on we can start on the third phase, the process of reinvigorating manufacturing industry and creating the new jobs there, which is a longer term and in one sense the more important operation.

Do you have specific targets as to how much you hope to have achieved by when?

No, nor can we have. We don't know what the state of the economy will be when we're elected in two years time. I myself think that unemployment will probably be higher and certainly

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not appreciably less than it is now. But since we do not know the extent of the rundown, the inflation level, the exchange rates, the idea of putting figures on things two years beforehand seems to me irresponsible in every way.

Wouldn't it be possible to accelerate the impact of the measures you've specified especially the first one, job creation, by substantially increasing taxation to finance more rapid job creation in the public sector?

There will be an increase in taxation. Certainly the richest 5% of the population will have to make a bigger contribution to the economy. Then, as we begin to expand the economy, there will be a natural increase in the tax-take. But I don't believe we can run the economy successfully by talking as if all we have to do is increase taxes on middle and lower incomes. There have to be other ways of finding money. Not least because if we are to maintain confidence both within Britain and outside, we have to run a policy that looks as if it is going to work over a medium and long term. One of the things I am absolutely determined not to do, my abiding nightmare apart from the thought of losing the next election, is to have two years in which we talk as if everything can be done easily – more taxes, a big increase in borrowing, an enormous injection of demand into the conomy – and then find at the end of two years we are back where we started, that we have external and internal crises and have to wind it all down again. We are not going to do what the last Labour government did, and we're not going to do what the present French government did. We are going to do a bit more each year rather than a bit less each year.

On the other hand if, after recognising those constraints, it means that after several years of a Labour government you still have a substantial pool of long-term unemployed, what would you say to them if they have not benefitted and remain in the same position as at the beginning of a Labour government?

I'd say that we failed. But I'm not going to hypothesise the second stage of my policy on the assumption that the first stage failed. I believe that by moving firmly but with prudence we can maintain a continual, though you may regard it as modest, reduction in the unemployed. And I would much rather us get to the end of the first Labour government having reduced unemployment by x, than get to two years into a Labour government where we've reduced it by x plus y, only to discover that the entire economic prescription has come to a halt because of some ghastly crisis.

Let's turn to the issue of modernisation. You have increasingly placed a lot of empahasis on a central role being played by the National Investment Bank. It's emerging as a crucial part of your strategy. Could you just say what the NIB is and what you expect from it?

The NIB is important for three reasons. First, it's going to provide investment for manufacturing industry in a way that hasn't been provided before. There's going to be a financial institution that will work with industry, that feels part of industry, and therefore makes investment decisions related to industrial potential rather than to the accounting procedures which now normally determine whether money is available or not. And of course some of its loans will be low interest loans, and what in my experience industry wants most of all to encourage it to invest is a better return on its invesment. Secondly, it is the vehicle by which we will organise our new exchange control scheme. It's very important, in my view, to repatriate the export of capital. And it would not be as desirable to us if we required the capital to come back and simply had it sloshing about in the City of London not doing anything very much. Thirdly, it will enable us to underpin the exchange rates.

If the funds available to the NIB are relatively small, then presumably its economic impact will be very limited. If on the other hand, the sums involved are very large, are there going to be takers for that scale of money, especially as you see small and medium-sized firms as the main borrowers?

The sums are going to be large. But the money will not go solely to small firms in the manufacturing sector. Part of it will be available for investment in capital projects in the public sector, for work on the infrastructure. Part of its money will certainly be available for larger projects, if the larger projects want to take money from the NIB which I believe they will. The reason I have concentrated on small firms is because all the evidence suggests that bigger companies find it comparatively easy to raise money. It is small companies which find it difficult to raise capital. I also believe that small and medium-sized companies ought to be the engine of growth in this country, as they are in other economies. The reason they are not is partly that they can't raise capital.

From what you are saying it appears that the NIB will not influence the major investment decisions in our economy which, after all, are

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made by very large firms, most of them multinational in character.

First, the NIB will produce a new set of investment money – not the City of London. The City of London's monopoly, with all that that entails, has been broken. Secondly, by providing money for small and medium sized growing firms, we are protecting them from one of the things that makes them sacrifice themselves to the multinationals and giant companies. For one of the reasons small companies merge with bigger ones is they cannot raise the money to put down plant and equipment on their own. The fact that the money is there will help to reduce concentration. Thirdly, you mustn't think the NIB is the only way we are trying to break the power of the classic traditional investment institutions. The Labour party has always thought of power in terms of industry, we've not thought of it in terms of finance. More and more we now realise that power is exercised by people at one stage removed from industry itself. We have to look at the City of London and how it is governed and how it distributes its money.

Aren't you likely to be very short of industrial borrowers? There's evidence that the large enterprises in Britain are very liquid at the moment, with some sitting on cash mountains. Aren't industrial borrowers just as short-sighted, just as risk-averse, as the lenders? And therefore isn't there a need for a very large exercise in direct public investment? It might be necessary to start the programme going by using instruments such as the British Technology Group, the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies and local enterprise boards as direct investors.

There will be more investment, I think, when it is discovered that you can borrow to invest at lower rates than in the market place. One of the reasons that GEC is sitting on a lot of money is simply that it is more profitable to do it that way because of present interest rates. But you're right. One of the reasons we want to see more done through the local enterprise boards is because we believe that sort of public enterprise has to be there to stimulate British management, which is notoriously timid.

You have given general support to the notion of indicative planning. Given the experience of the National Economic Development Council and the National Economic Development Office, how far do you think they can be useful institutions?

I think the Office has done a great deal of very valuable work. It has drawn the attention of government and companies to a lot of underlying problems which they would have been too shortsighted to see. One of the functions of the Office is to draw people's attention to the wood when they are normally obsessed with the trees. And it's very important that the Office should go on doing that. The little Neddys also do a lot of valuable work. But what I am hugely sceptical about, though it gets me into great trouble with my firends in the TUC for saying so, is the work of the Council itself. I do not believe that the problems of this country are going to be solved by 50 grand people sitting round a table on Thursday morning and coming to the conclusion that is determined by all men and women of goodwill. I believe that the Neddy solution, the idea that we can all move half-an-inch in that direction and it will produce an agreement, has done a great deal of harm.

Now, having said that, a word in this context on the industrial strategy of the last Labour government. It was based on the slogan that we would pick winners. I think it's almost impossible for government to pick winners. Every government has talked about picking winners. When you ask them what the winners are, they find it very difficult to define winners which are not determined by the market. In a sense I think it's more important for government to decide where the losers are going to be and what they are going to do about them, how they are going to compensate for industry which is shrinking, how they are going to provide new jobs in areas where old industries cannot contine and cannot be established. So I don't want to see a recurrence of what happened in 1975. I certainly want to see a National Enterprise Board formed, but I want it to be doing work which we know is to be concerned with our social aims. The idea that that is double guessing industry seems to me to be totally misconceived.

In your speeches you've rejected the Morrisonian model of nationalised enterprises.

Can I just say that I've rejected the Morrisonian concept for anything other than the public utilities – gas, water, electricity. For the public utilities you have to have a centrally-run state corporation.

What's your approach to the firms that have been privatised by the Tory government? Will you renationalise?

The nationalisation programme must be determined by *our* priorities, not by the reverse priorities of the Conservative government. To put it at its most banal, I'm not going to waste a moment renationalising Gleneagles Hotel, and I'm not going to spend very many moments renationalising Thomas Cook. On the other hand, British Telecom in my view has, by its nature, to be run again as a single public utility. Now the form in which that

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return to public ownership is managed is something that John Smith, the Communication Workers Union and others are going to discuss over the coming year. I've no doubt at all, according to the sort of rules I lay down for myself – whether it is a national service which should be equally available throughout the country, whether the rest of the economy is very much dependent on it, whether it has a defence or civil liberties content to what it does – British Telecom comes into the category of public utilities which have to be nationally owned.

Would you add to it British Airways?

Yes.

British Aerospace?

Yes. We should take British Aerospace into social ownership, but I think we have to consider the form in which the new enterprise would be constructed. In all manufacturing industry, I would like to see a much closer involvement of all employees in management.

You have also talked about extending public ownership. Where do you see that happening?

It will have to happen in manufacturing industry. In one sense here we are back to small and medium-sized firms. Some of our most successful extensions to public ownership have been through enterprise boards, working sometimes on buyouts, sometimes on co-operatives, sometimes on companies that are semi-private but which have a very substantial local authority share in management control. In my view this is the way to expand public ownership in manufacturing industry. You cannot have a state motor corporation in the sense that it is centrally run. I don't want to see a motor corporation which looks as if it's public, as ours did six years ago, but is more remote from its workers, and the interests of the regions, than it was when it was privately owned. The only way you can get the real social ownership that I want to see in manufacturing industry is through these small and middle-sized units.

Your specific proposals with regard to industrial democracy and increasing employee participation nearly always boil down to turning the employees into shareholders, rather than expanding the control and the influence of the employees as such.

I don't think they do. Several different things are involved. Certainly I don't think the extension of public ownership, which I want to see, could possibly be, or ought to be, an extension of nationalised corporations run as state monopolies from London. We've got to think of some models which are autonomous, which can be run through the regions, and which can be run by, or profoundly influenced by, the people who work in them. I've said there's got to be much more local authority enterprise, I've said that there's got to be more co-operatives, both consumer and producer. And I've said specifically that we've got to not only remove the disadvantages that co-ops now suffer under our tax laws, but we've got to find ways of actually promoting them. I've said there have got to be schemes where workers have shares in the companies. But I've specifically said that I'm not interested in share ownership as a bonus to middle management. It's got to be a scheme which is available to all employees, and it's got to carry with it rights to influence company policy, not just rights to draw

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some kind of dividend at the end of the year. You see I don't think you can have any one model. We are going to run a mixed economy. The mixture under the next Labour government will be slightly different in that there will be more public ownership and a bit less private. But within both the publicly-owned and privately-owned sector, I want more and more influence by the workers on management decisions. You need a variety of models to work with.

Governments attempting independent policies that go against the international current face very real constraints. That's common ground. You propose to reduce overseas investment by imposing tax penalities on institutions which hold too high a share of foreign assets. However your statements on public borrowing indicate that you will work within the constraints imposed by internationalised financial markets, rather than trying radically to shift that structure. Is that correct?

Yes. The idea that Britain alone can stick out against and beat the constraints of international markets seems to me to be pure fantasy. Now, we can insulate ourselves from them to a degree. The exchange controls scheme is one of the ways of stopping a run on the pound. We can insulate ourselves from capital movements and some manufacturing goods movements by limited import controls. but the international pressures, particularly if we are in a Western European environment where other governments are taking a different view from us, will be very substantial. And it is simply courting disaster to pretend that these people do not exist, and to pretend that they do not have power and influence. I have to strike a balance between doing what's right, and doing what's possible. And I've no doubt the balance will be moved much more in my direction if I can convince those whose confidence I need that whilst I'm doing things that they may ideologically disapprove of, at least my arithmetic adds up.

You mentioned earlier the centrality of equality. Let's get to specifics. Women constitute half the population and are very highly discriminated against. What is there, in your approach, for women.

There are two things in it for women. First, I don't believe that those groups within the population, minorities or a majority which are at present disadvantaged, are likely to have those disadvantages ended during a period of recession. If we can move the economy forward we are more likely to provide employment opportunities and facilities for women. Secondly, though it won't be my responsibility directly, I hope that in the area of women and also ethnic minorities we are going to do the two things that socialism requires us to do in our pursuit of equality. One is to provide the formal rights – for example, rights for women to be employed in certain occupations which still, covertly if not overtly, discriminate against them. But equally, too, we are going to provide the facilities which enable the previously disadvantaged groups to take advantage of their new rights. It's no good coming to my constituency and saying that we are going to insist that women who apply for certain jobs are given a fair chance of getting them if there aren't facilities which enable the women to go to work – there's somebody looking after their kids, they've got shops open at a different times etc.

Your speeches stand open to the criticism that they don't reflect women's needs and desires more explicitly.

My speeches are open to the criticism, and always have been, that they don't contain the fashionable phrases and buzzwords. But what I've said, for instance, about an assault on low pay – I am a believer in a statutory minimum wage – will do a great deal to assist women. I don't take the view that a statutory minimum wage will prevent women from working. I take quite the opposite view.

You have said very little in your speeches about the tax system. As a future chancellor of the exchequer that's going to loom rather large in your thinking in practice. What do you have to say about fiscal policy?

I'm not going to introduce my 1989 budget in this interview. I can't tell you now or in a year's time the actual pattern of taxes we'll introduce. I can tell you some of the things we want to see. We think that capital produces far too small a contribution to the revenue, and we'd like to increase it. We intend to increase the

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STYLE

Campaign trendsetters: party leader Neil Kinnock measures up for Labour's Jobs And Industry campaign with the new pioneers of fashionable politics, designers Katharine Hamnett, Stevie Stewart and David Holah.

The labour movement in Britain has never gone in for style. Compared with the festivities of the Italian Communist party or the fireworks and flowers that greeted the election of a Greek Socialist government, the Left here has taken its politics rather soberly, tending to view style and glamour with some suspicion.

Yet, in recent years, there has been a shift in the ways that the Left has begun to communicate its politics to a wider public. The Labour party led by Neil Kinnock has taken to using the media in a directly populist way. The GLC has employed advertising on a large scale in its campaign against abolition and to attract huge crowds to festivals on London's South Bank.

During the miners' strike, independently-made videos began to be circulated as an alternative news network for striking communities. These are signs of a new awareness of the need to communicate socialist ideas in accessible and popular forms.

But what does it mean for the Labour party to commission designer sweatshirts or to launch its Jobs and Industry Campaign with a Billy Bragg tour? Is this a sell-out to populism, a packaging of serious issues for a youth audience indifferent to politics, or a genuine attempt to get to grips with the styles and fashions of contemporary popular culture?

Clearly the success of the Thatcher government in mobilising the media in anti-socialist causes has forced the Left to think seriously about how it can get its views across effectively to a wide audience. This has meant, for example, some union journals adopting the style and tone of tabloid newspapers, and local authorities using the techniques of pop videos for their campaigns.

But perhaps more important in changing the style of the Left itself has been the impact of the different political cultures of blacks, women and gays in giving a new significance to imagery, music, poetry and dress as forms of political expression.

It is possible to overexaggerate these changes. The average party or trade union meeting still has to be endured rather than enjoyed, and the routine criticism that their style excludes rather than invites participation could be applied equally to the literature which they produce.

Does style matter, though? Should we be concerned about the contemporary 'image' of the Left? To those for whom any attempt to bring style to politics is merely Saatchi and Saatchi-type image making the answer would be 'no'. But while socialist styles and imagery cannot be manufactured by an ad agency, they are nonetheless important.

The Left has had a powerful tradition of socialist iconography, but one which, with its stress on heroic white male working class values, is no longer current today. This is not simply a question of updating old styles, but of a need for the language and imagery of socialism to communicate with the knowledge, the hopes and desires of people in the present.

That means taking advantage of the new possibilities opened up by the media technologies of video and cable TV, being aware of popular cultural forms in music or fashion, and paying attention to the ways in which symbols and images are produced out of specific struggles, for example, at Greenham.

If the Left reverts to its old puritanical ways of seeing style as purely class based or else as the product of commercial manipulation, it will not be capable of generating a contemporary imagery for socialism. Striking design, visual imagination, musical energy or a sense of fun are not un-socialist qualities. They may even be crucial if we want to communicate that participation and enjoyment, as well as work and commitment, are a necessary part of socialism.

Rosemary Betterton

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SELLING SOCIALISM

When the last GLC billboard disappears from London next year, it will leave behind more than an advertising agency weeping over the loss of a big-spending client.

The council's success in winning the battle for public opinion over GLC abolition will influence political campaigning for years to come. There are already signs that an expensive contract with a West End advertising agency could become the new virility symbol of campaigning organisations, be they political parties or single issue groups.

All those billboards failed to keep the GLC working for London – the council is being abolished. But they have persuaded many people on the Left that advertising can work for us: largely thanks to the GLC, there is a new willingness to use the techniques of market research, advertising and public relations. And about time too. We lag years behind the Right, leaving them to laugh all the way to the polls.

There are, however, inherent dangers in this new-found enthusiasm. Some of us seem to have made the leap from the Left's traditional suspicion of advertising to the new enthusiasm without a pause for thought. In some quarters, advertising is being seen as an answer to all our problems: a complete campaign and publicity strategy instead of a considered part of one.

Advertising is no substitute for a vision of how society could be organised or for the policies to achieve that. It is an advertising agency's job to know what people are receptive to and how to turn that to the advertiser's advantage. For some on the Left, that crudely translates in the field of political advertising to watering down your policies so you can tell the public what they want to hear. Of course it doesn't have to. The challenge is to use advertising and other marketing methods without selling out our politics along the way.

It is hard to argue with the claim that modern marketing techniques have worked for the Tories. But just because some people on the Left think Mrs Thatcher and her sophisticated publicity machine have managed to fool enough people enough of the time to win two general elections is no reason for us to try to outdo her. That approach smacks of contempt for people as a blank sheet of paper on which you can write anything. If we are to embrace advertising, let us do it to promote our values and principles, not to manipulate people.

Manipulation wouldn't work in the long run. Advertising cannot sell a bad or unpopular product – not forever anyway. Mrs Thatcher isn't fooling enough of the people at the moment, if you believe the opinion polls. Labour's unhappy experience of advertising in the 1983 general election also illustrates the point. Research in the run-up to the campaign showed that Labour was seen as divided and negative, always critical and never constructive. But a slogan telling people to 'Think positive, act positive, vote Labour' wasn't the answer. It was a mechanistic response to the research findings. It didn't convince anybody.

To return to the GLC campaign, we have to remember that it wasn't selling *socialism* at all. The GLC and its advertising agency knew their targets. They were after the people, many of them Alliance or even Tory voters, who could be persuaded to support the need for a London-wide strategic authority. So the real product on the GLC billboards was liberal democracy. The billboards told Londoners their right to vote was under threat and the knee-jerk reaction was outrage, even among people who had never bothered to exercise their vote in past GLC elections.

In the early days of the campaign, the advertising agency avoided attacking Mrs Thatcher head-on. Her political position appeared too strong for that. That's why the agency instead chose to exploit the commonly-held view of bureaucrats as remote, out of touch, and unfriendly. It was an example of advertising that recognised what people were receptive to and turned it to the advertiser's advantage.

The billboards certainly had impact. But were huge images of the Whitehall bureaucrat as a slow moving snail or a brick wall really compatible with a socialist strategy? Should a council or a political party committed to the public sector be attacking civil servants? Why are County Hall bureaucrats any better than Whitehall ones? And will they suddenly become the good guys when there's a Labour government at Westminister again?

The GLC has produced some good examples of potentially socialist advertising, particularly in the areas of race, women and disabilities. The billboard on racism which asked people if they were part of the problem or the solution is a case in point. The council and the agency had clearly identified the basic problem in society they wanted to tackle. The billboard demonstrated clear goals and values, translated in an imaginative way.

It's that final step – the translation of policies and ideas in a way which will attract people – where so much of the Left's campaign work falls down. We fail to come up with the language and images that project socialism in a positive way. That is where advertising agencies can help us.

Inevitably, there will be tension in any relationship between organisations on the Left and commercial advertising agencies. They're more used to selling soap than socialism. But then we're better at producing policies than projecting them.

Mike Roberts

Fighting rate-capping on the streets: adverts from the recent campaign to stave off cuts in local government spending

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GETTING INTO PRINT

If you have been set the task of getting something printed – a leaflet, poster or pamphlet – and have no idea how to go about it, read on. First, organise your thoughts *before* you phone the printer. Be able to specify at least quantity and size that you need. If you are working to a set budget, tell the printer or print buyer what it is. They will then be able to cut your fantasies of a full-colour billboard poster down to an A4 single-colour flyer with a single giggle. If you *are working to a deadline*, tell the printer immediately what it is. Do not expect the impossible.

Having established your requirements the next step is to provide the printer with **artwork** (a facsimile of the printed product which is photographed by the printer as the first stage of the printing process).

If you are preparing your own artwork, ask the printer to provide you with the necessary number of **layout boards,** which have blue guidelines printed on them to make layout easier. *Use one side of the board only.* The images on the artwork must be sharp and clear. You can draw extra guidelines for yourself with a pale **blue pencil** (*not* pen) as these will not be picked up by the camera.

If you are typing the text, use a typewriter with a carbon ribbon, or get it **typeset.** Drawings or diagrams should be drawn in black or red (which the camera 'sees' as black). It is also possible to use photocopied material as long as the image is clear and sharp.

Grey or indistinct images reproduce badly, lower the quality of the finished product and can increase the price. You will also need a tin of **cowgum,** a **cowgum spreader** (see Yellow Pages under Art and Craft Materials for stockists), and a **ruler** or **set square.**

When you have assembled the text and illustrations, tape the layout board firmly to a flat surface at all four corners. Work within the guidelines shown on the layout board. If you do not have layout boards, use a sheet of firm card, draw a box the size of the paper on it and then draw another box in blue pencil 10mm smaller all round. The text must stay within this inner box.

Spread the cowgum thinly and evenly (be sure to get it right to the corners) on the back of the text and stick the various bits down where you want them. You now have camera-ready artwork.

Take this to the printer, accompanied by clear written instructions – name, address, daytime telephone number where you can be contacted if required, *size, quantity and colour of ink and*

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Of the 35 video tapes listed in the catalogue, 15 are available for hire or sale from the Archive itself. The others can be obtained directly from the producers (addresses and telephone numbers supplied.) Also in the catalogue are lists of contacts for photographic collections/exhibitions, books and plays about the strike.

THE CATALOGUE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER.

If you would like to order a copy of the catalogue, to hire or buy the video tapes, or to get more information contact: Sue Kennedy or Belinda Williams, the Northern Film & T.V. Archive, 36 Bottle Bank, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 2AR. Tel: 091 477 3601.

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paper that you want, the date you require finished copies and a delivery address.

If your budget allows, you can have your material **typeset** (which allows you to get a lot more words legibly on a page, as well as look professional). The typesetter will need to know how many words you require typeset and what size the finished product is to be. An A4 page of typing in single line space with a one-inch margin all round will be approximately 650 words; line and a half space will be 420 words, and double line space 330 words. (Typesetters prefer to work from double line spaced typed copy).

The typesetter will ask if you are providing **marked-up copy.** This is text where the typeface, size, line-length and so on are clearly marked. If you do not have the skills to do this, the typesetter will do it, but they may charge extra.

The typesetter will provide you with **bromides** which you paste down on your artwork. Complicated figure work (i.e. tables or accounts) costs more so specify if this is part of your manuscript.

If you have even more money, ask the typesetter or printer to prepare the artwork for you. The finished artwork will then be top quality which means that even if you've opted for the cheapest print process, the finished product will look good. Saving money on artwork can be a false economy.

If you have a reasonable budget and a professional product is needed, hire a designer. Make an appointment and go armed with all the facts and figures mentioned above, a copy of your manuscript and any photographs or illustrations you want to include plus your organisation's logo or letterhead, if you have one.

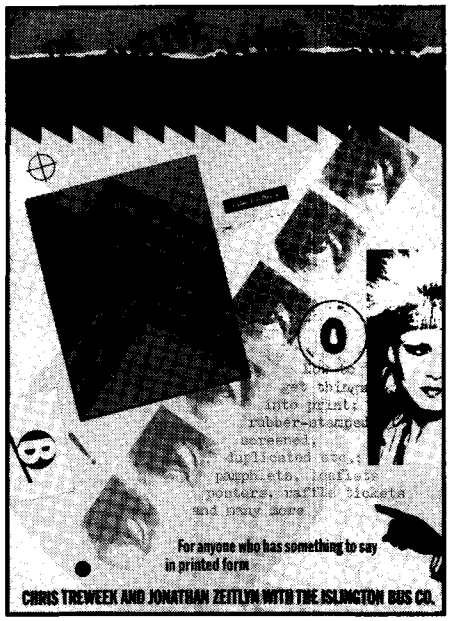
How much you participate in the design process is up to you. You can choose your typeface and indicate the general style that you want (if you've seen a product that you particularly like, take it along to give some indication of your preferences) or you can leave it entirely to the designer to come up with a design. Co-op printers and typesetters will be able to recommend a sympathetic designer.

There are several different categories of printer, each suited to a particular size and type of job. At the smallest end of the spectrum, if what you want is 50 or 100 leaflets, then a decent photocopier is all you need. Photocopiers usually have a fixed price per copy, whereas offset litho printing has a lot of fixed costs, but the cost per copy drops dramatically as the quantity increases.

For colour or quality work, litho printing is the best process to use. For small jobs such as a couple of hundred posters or 500 A5 leaflets, an instant print shop is probably best. They specialise in a quick turnaround and use a mixture of photocopy and small-scale litho printing.

For high quality or a large quantity, use a litho printer. Different printers specialise in different products depending on the type of machinery they have, so the only way to find the best printer for you is to phone around for quotes. You can find a printer through Yellow Pages, or find a sympathetic co-op printer through the co-op directory.

Isabel Thomson and Tony Swash



You've seen the campaigning videos, tried on the politicised tee-shirts – now try the books. ***The Alternative Printing Handbook*** **by Chris Treweek and Jonathan Zeitlyn (Penguin 1983) is crammed with no-nonsense information and hints on DIY printing methods and lay-out and paste-up techniques. Sue Ward's** ***Organising Things*** **(Pluto 1984) is similarly useful for all kinds of campaigns, and her checklists and good format make it an excellent basic guide. Advice on getting media coverage for campaigns is contained in Denis MacShane's** ***Using the Media*** **(Pluto 1979),** ***Voluntary Organisations and the Media*** **by Maggie Jones (NCVO Bedford Square Press 1984) and Jane Drinkwater's** ***Get It On*** **(Pluto 1984). For some really zany suggestions for campaigns, learn something of how it's done in the US from the introduction to James Pitt and Maurice Keane's booklet** ***Community Organising: You've Never Really Tried It*** **(from LVSC, 68 Chalton Street, London NW1).**

SCREEN PLAY

In general the Left has been slow to catch on to the uses of the new media, including film and video, preferring on the whole the more traditional approaches of selling newspapers and leaflets. But, following the lead of the GLC, some organisations have begun to include film and video in their materials, thus opening up their campaigning methods to new audiences. For film and video-makers these initiatives have provided an impetus to re-examine many of the assumptions which we have worked with in the past.

Over a decade ago, political film-makers were not too worried about technique. The accepted orthodoxy was that it did not matter much if the camera shook or the sound was difficult to catch (by definition, political films were made on a shoestring anyway), the priority was getting the politics right.

The films, many of them innovative and challenging, were shown in clichéd settings of small halls with ropey equipment and, even if the content was exciting, the presentation was generally poor.

Several things have happened since then to transform the situation. The first, interestingly enough, is the advent of Channel 4. With many radical film groupings, particularly around *The Eleventh Hour*, commissioned to work for the Channel, film-makers themselves have had to think about how to address a far wider audience than they previously had access to.

The setting up of local workshops, funded jointly by Channel 4, local authorities and the British Film Institute,

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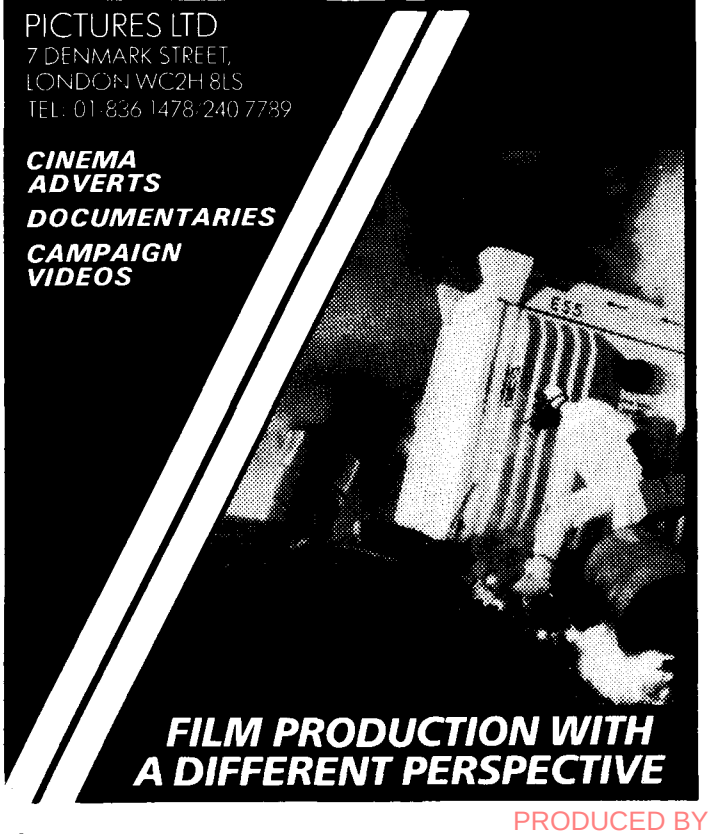

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has established regional production centres. These provide both greater security for film workers, allowing them to develop their expertise, and also the kind of access for smaller organisations to professional film and video-making at a local level which was previously impossible.

Lastly, the video revolution has made the medium more attractive to campaigning and political groups. Nowadays, every issue spawns its own video presentation and every exhibition stall its own video loop. For the Left, video has finally become a boom industry.

The plethora of films and videos around now begins to raise questions. Just how useful is a video to a campaign? There is an increasing suspicion that many videos gather dust on office shelves and only see the light of day at a handful of meetings, despite a conviction that film and video should be able to reach the audiences that other materials fail to reach. After all, in these times of all-day television, visual media is where most people are at. In tackling this problem, radical film-makers are having to confront ideas that the Left traditionally shies away from.

Slickness or 'gloss' is still something that is distrusted by large sections of the Left, the assumption being that if a video looks like a Gas Board advert its politics must somehow be compromised. Likewise the use of 'stars' can either be written off as pandering to commercialism or alternatively, viewed as a concerted attempt to break into new audiences.

Yet precisely what has made the GLC campaigns, for instance, so effective is that they have moved into the traditional preserves of commercialism and in doing so imposed their own style on them. They have taken little for granted, working from forms which are familiar to the vast majority of the population (like billboards) and using them to take their politics forward. If film and video are to follow the same path, then at least some of the techniques of programmes like *Coronation Street* have to be taken seriously and incorporated into our own approach. Without using such populist styles, how else is it possible to win an audience to think about new issues?

A film that *Parallax Pictures* recently made for the GLC posed this question very sharply. *Policing London* is a dramatic introduction to the GLC's policy on policing, starring David Yip (television's Chinese Detective). Much that the GLC has produced about the police has been more critical, more outspoken, less compromising. Yet *Policing London* caused a storm of controversy from the police, Leon Brittan, Tory GLC councillors and finally in parliament itself; and as a result the video has had so much news coverage that the GLC is inundated with requests to use it.

The reason for the uproar is that very 'slickness' from which the Left so often distances itself. To make something that is entertaining as well as political, attractive as well as committed, is seen by the Right to be dangerous and worth trying to stop.

Yet the Left cannot purely copy the Right. While its techniques have to be competitive – a CND cinema advert, for instance, must be able to stand up next to the Benson and Hedges advert in the Odeon, Leicester Square – its tone has to be different. The blatant manipulation of people and ideas which the Saatchi brothers and others indulge in, cannot be our weapon. Rather, we have to be continually linking promotion to campaigning, exploring new outlets and new ways of involving the audience in our approach. Thus, in the case of the CND advert, local groups booked it into their cinemas (so solving some of the cost problems), which also allowed them to leaflet and publicise their own activities at the same time.

The stumbling-block to this approach, for small campaign groups, is of course finance. But for national organisations the cost involved is a fraction of the money spent on written material each year. And, at the end of the day, an engaging well-produced video or a glossy cinema advert do open up new avenues and audiences to issues. Even without the resources of the Right, local councils and the labour and trade union movement have to espouse the new media, to ensure that the Left continues to have a voice transmitted through the most popular forms appropriate to the 1980s.

Sally Hibbin

A scene from a recent 60-second film made for cinemas to highlight the dangers of transporting nuclear waste by rail.

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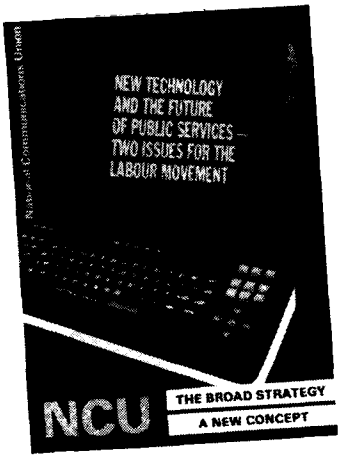
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HIGH TECH TALK

Microtechnology – the technology based on silicon chips – affects just about every type of communication other than talking face-to-face. Telephones, libraries, printing, even the visual arts are rapidly changing due to the introduction of systems using the fast, cheap and small circuits available on silicon.

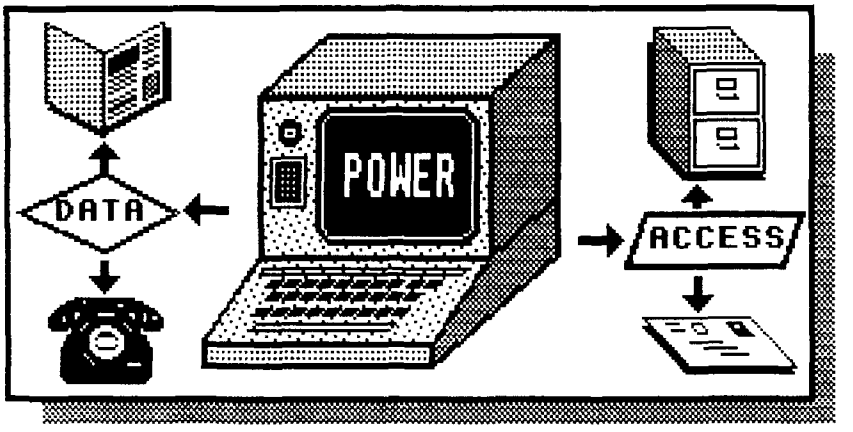
Some uses seem designed to hinder rather than help the sharing of ideas and information by making it accessible only to those with money. But the technology itself can be used to facilitate what we want to say, too. Much has been, and should be written on the political problems posed by the uses of microtechnology – but little on how we also need to use it, if radical movements are to survive against governments and business investing heavily in more sophisticated ways of communicating what *they* want to say.

The most obvious use of a microcomputer for a group is in automating their mailing or subscription lists. It isn't always worth it – for, say, under 500 subscribers it's probably less work doing it by photocopying labels.

But for larger numbers, or for lists that contain more than names and addresses, a computer not only cuts down routine work but also allows you the possibility of contacting people more effectively.

You can use a micro to do what is virtually impossible manually, to cross-reference in a multitude of ways, making networking easy. The National Women and Computing Network, for example, can put women in touch with women in their area, with their same interests or with particular computing skills. And the National Women's Mailing List in the USA maintains details of the feminist interests of more than 60,000 women, giving women's groups the opportunity to contact women with a specific interest – an effective way to 'target'.

It takes a leaf out of the *Readers' Digest*, although the Mailing List, unlike the *RD*, only contains the names of women who choose to be on their list and carefully avoids collecting any information that could be used against individuals.



It's certainly how the Right in the USA – the Moral Majority targetting Christians and the arms lobby targetting hawks – increasingly chooses to work to get their word out.

Word-processing – much loved by freelance journalists on the Left as well

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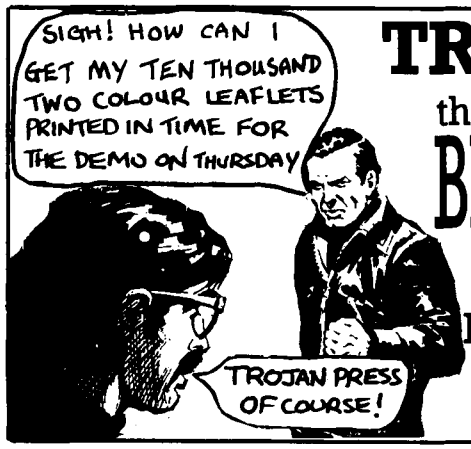

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as the Right – is much more than just a technique to write your novel. It allows groups much more flexibility in collective writing, since endless drafts can be made without anyone having to retype, and different people can merge what they write.

It levels out differences in typing ability, and even confidence in writing to some extent, and you can even get packages to check spelling. For the majority of groups who don't have their own micro to hand for day-to-day writing, access to someone else's can still make producing leaflets, newsletters or even magazines much easier.

Since the Left deals disproportionately in the printed word, word processors are obviously a useful thing to have around.

However, we could branch out into electronic means of reproducing words: sending news around the world via computer-phone links, which aren't very expensive to set up once you have the computer, or even setting up 'databases' that can be reached by the same link-ups.

There's a computer network based (unofficially) at the University of Wisconsin for people to find out the latest information about anti-apartheid demonstrations and their effects on companies who invest in South Africa, for example.

Computers, even small ones, can now store a great deal of information – cross-referenced – that we could use: bibliographies, contact addresses, statistics. *Microsyster* is talking at the moment with groups about databases on research on the effects of technological change on women, 19th century women, and feminist historians.

And we could organise to demand space on Prestel, British Telecom's TV-telephone link where 'information providers' put up pages, in colour, on our screens: if we don't demand it, it will all be home banking and telly-shopping.

Computer-based technology is considerably cheaper than it was five years ago, and also much simpler to use. This doesn't mean that a radical group can necessarily either afford their own equipment or take to it instantly, especially since they may know too much about some of the terrible problems associated with its use to feel happy about using it themselves.

If we are to turn it to our advantage, we must share access to it, be very clear about how and why its developed – and share knowledge of uses that the developers may not have intended.

Microsyster

DESIGNS ON THE LEFT

Open the pages of the latest issue of *Crafts,* the magazine of the Crafts Council, and you will see the influence of radical design in mainstream British publishing. The new art director of *Crafts* is David King, doyen of the dramatic stars and arrows of the Anti-Nazi League in the early 1970s. Now advertisments for Swedish looms and potters' equipment sit somewhere uncomfortably between spreads of glowing red duotones, bold underlines and photographs of professors of furniture at suitably dynamic angles. The crafts community has abandoned William Morris for the power and impact of constructivism.

Another designer who, though less poltically explicit, has entered the mainstream with a splash from the banks of

the counterculture is Neville Brody. Brody first came to prominence with the success of the then-radical *Face* before moving on to redesign *City Limits,* previously shaped by King.

Brody's approach is a far cry from the constructivist commitment of King. His style is eclectic and daring in its mix of old, new and hand-drawn faces and unconventional lettering. His obvious love of rule-breaking, in-joking, parody and pastiche celebrates a post-modern age where technology makes anything possible whilst reducing the image to the fleeting ephemera of the televisual age.

Brody's work has been widely imitated. It is difficult to find a young women's magazine today which does not contain some sub-Brody device employed to greater or, usually, lesser effect. Even packagers are grabbing at the potential impact of Brody's style to shift their clients' paper handkerchiefs and biscuits from supermarket shelves.

Yet despite the widely acknowledged importance of radical designers like King and Brody, the Left has often maintained a hesitant and cautious commitment to innovation in the graphics of its own publications. In part this results from a basic mistrust of the techniques employed by the advertising industry to create artificial demand in a world where starvation and poverty abound. The old purist's view that the message of socialism is powerful enough not to need dressing up in jazzy presentation still has its advocates.

But it is also true that the Left's failure to exploit the potential of graphics has stemmed from a basic lack of resources. Expensive design studios have always been outside the reach of the Left who have decided, rightly, that a choice between producing costly, highly-designed publications, or none, is no choice at all.

There are signs today that these problems are being overcome. In the first place the path-breaking work of the GLC and the other metropolitan councils has shown that it is possible to apply conventional marketing techniques, with their emphasis on graphic impact, without compromising the progressive message they are designed to deliver.

The facilities available to the Left to design its output are also vastly superior to those which existed only a few years ago. In part this results from developments in typesetting technology which has reduced the cost of previously complicated and expensive graphics.

But there is another reason. The incursions of the Left into the margins of mainstream publishing, particularly notable in the success of feminist and socialist book publishers, have provided a material base for the growth of a range of design facilities run by the Left for the Left.

If the creativity which individual designers of the Left have consistently displayed can be married with the day-to-day production of radical literature in a consistent manner the advantages of good presentation will become obvious. Design sells ideas. And, in today's highly-competitive ideological market, it is something socialists can ill-afford to treat lightly.

Colin Robinson

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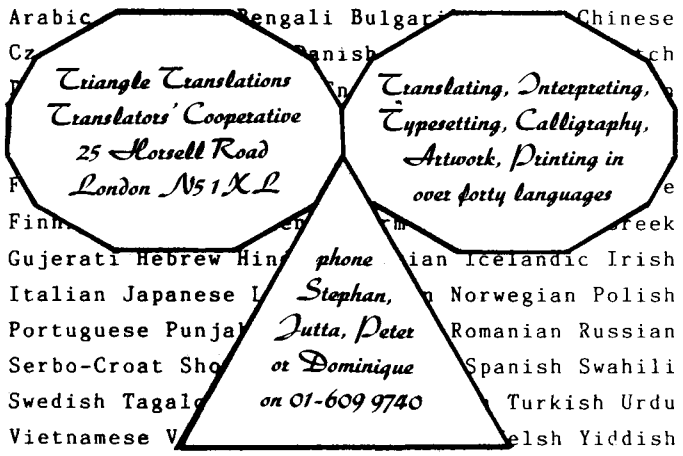

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In many ways, CND has the advantage of a message which can be presented symbolically in a clear and straightforward manner. Everyone is afraid of nuclear weapons, everyone has some vision of a peaceful world. When this is combined with the peace movement's concentration on the power of people to change the world, it can produce new and moving images and events: the ribbon of people surrounding the Pentagon, the dragon at Greenham, and doves of peace are all instantly comprehensible, as are processions of mourners carrying cruise missiles.

But images do not by themselves convince people: the arguments also have to be won. The best and most successful of the peace movement's attempts to impinge upon the outside world are characterised, I think, by this combination of *image* and *argument*.

A striking example of the use of images was the 'shadow project' of Hiroshima Week. On the evening of Monday August 5, thousands of shadows and explanatory messages were painted on the streets of Britain's cities, towns and villages (in washable paint!) as a reminder of the 'shadows' of people blasted onto pavements in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Another of CND's attempts to appeal to people in a different way has been through the medium of alternative but

Brighton citizens contemplate the awful effects of nuclear war during CND's 'shadow project' to mark Hiroshima Week.

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popular culture. This use of the creative arts was well illustrated in two recent events in Manchester. The first, called Peace in the Streets, involved taking over Manchester city centre one Saturday morning. On every street corner were performers: singers, mime artists, street theatre; all on the themes of peace, war and nuclear weapons.

As the morning went on, processions from local CND groups marched into the city centre for a short rally which included popular performers, artists and writers as well as other more obviously 'political' speakers.

In similar vein was the Free Trade Hall event, Come Alive in '85. Attracting 2,000 people, it was an enormous cabaret featuring song, dance and theatre acts to help to put across the basic campaign message.

A quite different method of bringing attention to nuclear weapons and their dangers is provided by non-violent direct action (NVDA) and civil disobedience. Here the effect lies in activists' willingness to put themselves at risk in order to make a political statement. NVDA has two aspects: its 'nuisance-value' to the authorities, and the impact of its message to the public. While some people would see the first of these as potentially bringing about a change in government policy, I think that the second is the more important, and therefore *how* the message is presented is crucial.

However, to some extent NVDA is still a concentration on *image* rather than *argument*: it depends upon people either already knowing the arguments in order to appreciate the act, or else discovering the arguments once their attention has been drawn to the issue by the act of civil disobedience. So how can the arguments be successfully presented?

Although the media is by no means always biased against CND's position, there is no doubt that the ordinary person receives a very heavy regular dose of the establishment's case. In countering this, CND has relied upon the staple tools of traditional campaigning, public meetings and street leafletting, with some door-to-door work.

The difficulty with public meetings, of course, is that the people whom we most want to reach never attend, so one tends to be preaching to the converted. On the other hand, door-knocking and personal contact require a large number of people and confident arguments.

By rethinking the traditional approach, Greater Manchester CND has found a partial solution to the first problem, whilst Bristol CND has been tackling the second.

There are up to 100 local groups in Greater Manchester CND. So in order to cover areas without groups or normally not exposed to CND (eg, housing estates), it has been possible to bus people in from nearby groups to leaflet wards in a sort of 'mass canvass'. The last time this was done a very successful CND group was set up in the area as a result. But, perhaps more importantly, a large number of people heard CND's arguments clearly stated for the first time.

Bristol CND has just launched a campaign called The Chance of a Lifetime (or A Lifetime of Chance)? in which positive messages, good visual images, clear arguments and a variety of different methods of presentation are all combined. Bristol's emphasis is on a 'rolling programme' of activity and publicity, using for example billboard ads, ballots of local opinion and window posters. 'Follow-up' teams are constantly thinking and planning ahead to the next project in a 6-month schedule of concerted campaigning.

There is undoubtedly still a long way to go before these new attempts to persuade and motivate public opinion can claim widespread success. But the core elements of direct personal contact, the use of symbols and vivid imagery provide us with an object lesson in new, creative forms of campaigning which do not depend upon access to the national media, or the enormous finance needed for massive advertising drives.

Elena Lieven

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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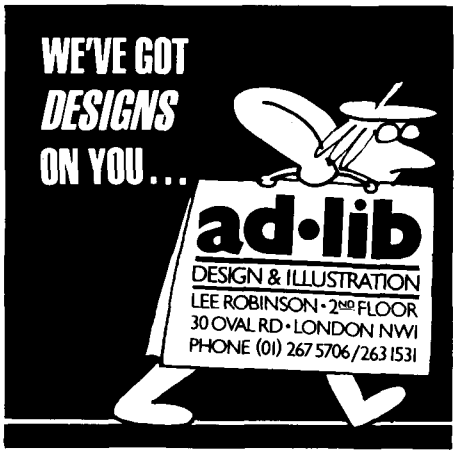
Elena Lieven is chair of Greater Manchester and district CND, and a member of CND's national executive
Tony Swash works for Trojan Co-operative Press, and **Isabel Thompson** works for Lasso Women's Design, a typesetting and artwork co-operative
Colin Robinson works for Verso and writes on design
Rosemary Betterton teaches at Sheffield Polytechnic



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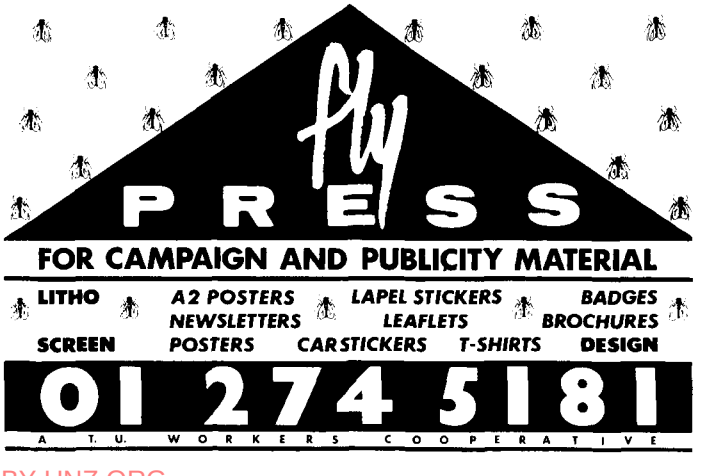

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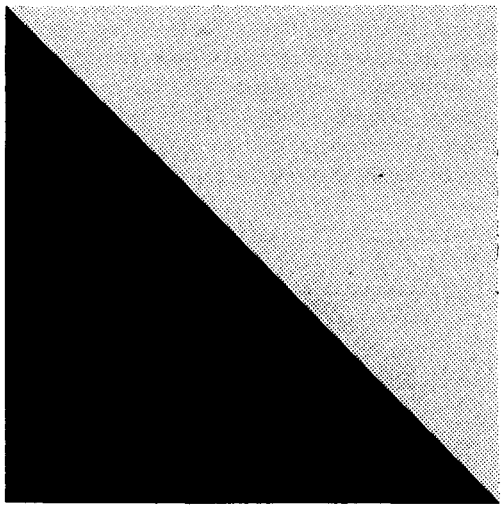

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national insurance contribution all the way up the income scale so that the very rich are paying the same proportion of their income in national insurance contributions as the very poor are paying. But the idea that I can give you a fiscal package now would be gimmickry.

You've discussed your approach towards unemployment and redistribution. What policy towards incomes is implied by these plans and how would you propose to implement it?

I don't believe that in the present situation, where there is a shortage of demand, wages are making very much impact on the level of unemployment. I don't hold the Lawson view that if we stop paying wage council rates in wage council industries there's going to be a lot more jobs. But I do hold the view that if we have a big injection of demand, we talked about £5 billion last year, we have to decide how that extra spending power is going to be distributed. And the more of it that goes on men and women in existing work, the less of it will be available for new jobs. I therefore, unashamedly, want as much of it as possible to go on new jobs as distinct initially from increases in wages. I've said that openly and continually. This is one of the areas where I have talked about the penalties. Now the concentration of that extra spending power on new jobs is only possible with the agreement of the trade unions. And by the agreement of the trade unions, I don't mean trade union leaderships alone, I mean the trade union membership. I don't believe it is possible to impose that discipline on trade unions by legislation, nor by saying 'this is not a statutory policy but we'll make life impossible for your companies if they don't abide by our proposals'. I believe it has to be done as a matter of consensus. We've failed to do that, and it's been a terrible deficiency on the part of the Labour party. It's all to do with this long absence of an ethical framework within which we've operated. We've treated incomes policy as if it was the burden which bad governments heaved on the backs of workers to make them pay the price of recovery. We ought to have used it as a way of building a more decent society where the lowest paid are paid more and the highest paid are paid less and the social services are preserved, and I am going to go on arguing for that. Now whether that results in a sufficient consensus being built up for the trade unions to co-operate I do not know. If they can't co-operate, then we will have to make the best of it, there won't be as much money as we had hoped for the creation of jobs.

There's going to be a very specific problem of public sector pay, in that by the time a Labour government might come into office, there will have been some 8 – 10 years of pressure on the relative standards of public compared with private sector workers. What are you going to do about that?

Clearly the public sector workers' pay has to be gradually rehabilitated. But equally the public sector worker has to know that there is no way that can be done immediately or even quickly. Take the teachers. The teachers deserve more than they are going to get out of this dispute. Now whilst I believe they would get that under a Labour government, the teachers are not going to get the 32.5% which is what is necessary to get them back to their previous levels. We will try to give them something approaching social justice, but social justice isn't going to happen in the first year of a Labour government. It may not happen in the first five years of a Labour government. These things have to be done gradually. But they'll be better off because we believe it's right they should be.

You are traditionally associated with the right-wing current within the Labour party, a gradualist consensus approach that prevailed in the 50s and 60s. Isn't it true that the Labour leadership of those years failed to modernise the economy and ensure steady social progress? From your point of view, how much continuity do you see between the present Labour strategy and the strategies followed under Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan?

Well far more with the strategies followed under Jim Callaghan than under Harold Wilson. I think the Callaghan government, 76-79, did a good job for socialism in a cold climate. I think from 1976 onwards we were a good government. We were doing the best we could in almost impossible circumstances. Now in the past, rather less now, I have been associated with what we call moderates, revisonists, the right wing. I've never felt myself to be part of that. I've been associated with them for two reasons. One is that many of my friends were in that category and in politics you are judged by your friends. Secondly, there are some key issues which are regarded as the judgement of left and right wing. I am unashamedly and unreservedly for the Atlantic alliance. I am unashamedly and unreservedly for British membership of the EEC. I was for EEC membership at the Treaty of Messina, which predates the Treaty of Rome. Now for 20 years in this party if you've been a NATO multilateralist and an EEC man you're on the right wing.

Now my other views are, in my view, genuinely radical socialist views. My view of society is Tawneyite, I'm a Croslandite and the book I'm trying to write now is saying that what they said about equality as being our objective is what we've failed to understand, failed to recognise and failed to pursue. I think what counts in socialism is your view on the nature of society and I want to see a more equal society. That failure represents a failing of the moderate view in the Labour party. We are not going to solve our economic problems by saying 'a bit more demand, lower interest rates, let's do what Jim Prior would do'. We are going to solve our economic problems by changing the structure of the economy. If you're telling me we have failed to do that in the past, I am agreeing with you. If you are telling me I am to blame, I am disagreeing with you.

The Left in the Labour party has gone through important change. How do you see the tendency you represent within the Labour party changing and developing. What alteration or shift in perspective appears to be taking place there, if any?

The tendency which I have been said to represent?

The tendency which you do represent, which you think of yourself as representing.

The radical Left wants to look for schemes and views and wants to deal with the overview rather than to look at next week's issue. There is a desire to return to some sort of ideological basis a sense of where we stand, and to try to measure our policies against it. I think in my part of the Labour party, whatever attraction there ever was to pragmatism, whatever attraction there was to managerial socialism has slightly gone. It's partly because it's a generational thing – in the 50s and 60s we were worried about the allegation that we couldn't run a fish and chip shop and therefore we had to prove that we could. My generation of Labour MPs doesn't have to prove that we could work for ICI because some of us have been offered jobs there when we graduated and I think we therefore feel we have an ideological role which was not expressed during the 50s and 60s. That's a great change. □

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Towards Youthopia?

Nostalgia has confused the way the Left see youth today.

Phil Cohen

IT IS OFTEN SAID that socialists have a bad habit of advancing towards the future looking back over their shoulders at the past. This is not the best position from which to approach a present in which so many of our traditional assumptions have been upset by deep changes in our social structure. This is especially true when it comes to discussing youth. It is all too easy to project our own formative political and cultural experiences on to the very different circumstances of young people today, and this tendency increases as a generation ages and becomes preoccupied with securing if not its immortality, then its own place in history.

The debate about Live Aid is a good example. Were we really witnessing a rebirth of the spirit of 68, or was this wishful thinking on the part of those for whom the Paris Maydays represented one of our finest hours? The issue becomes much more serious when we try to understand the situation of that other Young England whose predicaments were so magically dissolved by the global idealism of 'we are the world'. I am talking about those hundreds of thousands of young people who are having to grow up working class without work. It seems to me that debates about youth unemployment on the Left are no less dominated by nostalgia. I will try to show, not only that there is a correlation between generations and the views they hold, but that the position produced by this are unable to grasp the complexity of the problem. It is necessary to make a critique of these positions before we can face a post-industrial society with a renewed vision of what socialism might have to offer the young.

The labour movement, on the whole, still remains wedded to an archaic image of the working class, a world in which the brass bands are always playing, the banners swaying, and the onward march of labour is only halted because it's time for Mrs T. Youth unemployment tends to be seen through the historical spectacles of the 1930s. It is seen as a mainly cyclical phenomenon which can be cured by reflationary measures. The first and last task of a Labour government is to create the conditions for a return to something like full employment.

This view has lost ground over recent years as it became evident that increased investment in manufacturing industry is not a viable strategy for job creation. Indeed it would, if anything, accelerate job losses due to the technological displacement of youth labour, which is concentrated in low productivity sectors. The consensus in the Labour party is now that we are dealing with a structural problem which can be alleviated in the short term by increased state intervention. Hopes are pinned on a bigger and better youth training scheme, which will deliver a skilled and politically educated generation of young workers into an expanded public service sector, where they will be concentrated in labour intensive 'people minding' jobs. The collapse of the old blind alley forms of manual labour is welcomed as paving the way for new and more progressive kinds of social and life skill training related to this kind of work.

> it constructs a sunshine image of socialism to set against the long cold winter of Thatcherism

Behind this view is a particular set of assumptions about the meaning of unemployment. For example, it is assumed that school leavers without a job to go to are as demoralised as older workers who find themselves thrown on the economic scrapheap at the age of 40. So we get a picture of a lost generation, traumatised by events beyond their control and driven by despair into a variety of anti-social activities. Comparisons with the 1930s abound, especially in associating rising levels of unemployment with increasing working class support for racist and fascist organisations.

This labourist view of the problem, and its attendant solutions, has however been challenged by a new cultural politics which tends to look at the situation through the youth spectacles of the late 60s. Not surprisingly a very different picture emerges. Young people are not demoralised, they are positively celebrating their freedom from the constraints of wage labour, enjoying employing their time and each other in a variety of more creative pursuits. The weakening of the links between growing up, working and class has, in this view, opened up new sites of life-style experimentation for young people, especially for girls and black youth. As youth cultures generate their own means of livelihood, their own hidden economy and social support systems, the old work ethnic finally capitulates before a new politics of pleasure. The unemployed youth of the 80s are thus supposedly fulfilling the project of affluent drop-outs of the 60s – they are refusing to be ground down by the oppressive circumstances of their everyday lives. Moral panics about youth unemployment – the threat of riots, drug abuse and petty crime – are seen as a cover for a far greater 'scandal'; the fact that more and more working class youth are choosing love on the dole rather than YTS. This in

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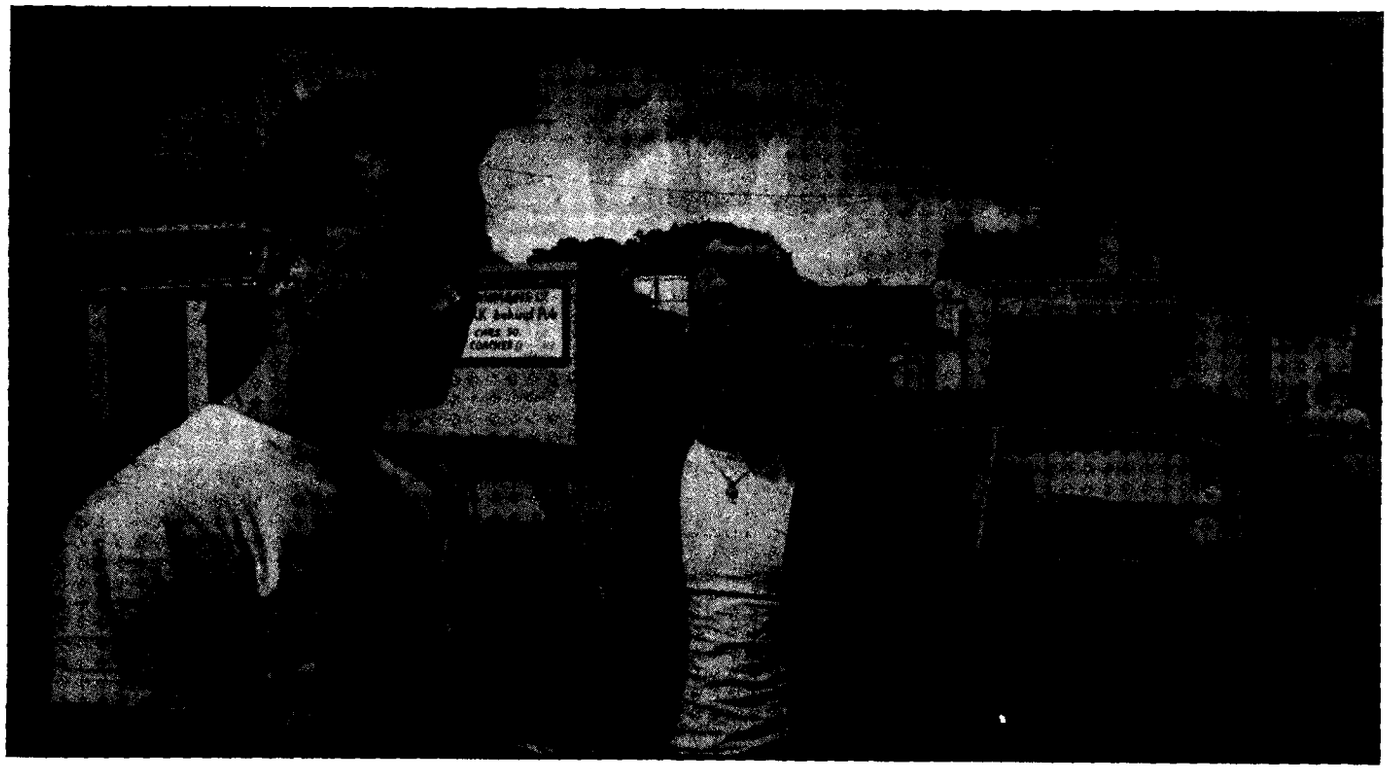

turn brings them into conflict with the state which responds by intensifying its various forms of surveillance and control. The final political message seems to be – farewell to the old working class (and good riddance, given its sexist, ageist and racist formation) and welcome to the new – defined by its relation to the state rather than to capital, and belonging unmistakably to the modern world.

every casual cultivates an 'individual look' based on permutations of the style

The new youth

We might characterise this position, in homage to Live Aid, as youthopian. It constructs a sunshine image of socialism to set against the long cold winter of Thatcherism, a utopia of the eternally young at heart, who have found a way of living on the rock n' roll in the midst of a crisis-ridden capitalism which denies them any principle of hope.

Before we dismiss this vision it might be worth considering for a moment whether the argument does have some basis in reality. It is, after all, certainly the case that working class life-cycles have undergone some major changes in the last 10 years, partly as a result of the collapse of the youth labour market and the apprenticeship system, and partly due to state restructuring of 16-19 provision. A new pattern is emerging in which youth is stretched at both ends. Children are entering the embrace of youth culture at an even earlier age, whilst entry into adulthood, as conventionally defined by leaving home, getting married and gaining financial independence, is being dramatically postponed. This imposed moratorium, based on extended schooling or training, is perhaps bringing working-class youth closer to middle-class adolescence. Certainly the basic contradiction of youth, between its position of political and economic powerlessness, and its ideological potency as a symbol of sexual desirability is intensifying, especially for girls. In response symbols of maturity are being improvised which are not so beholden to traditional gender roles, or to the collective practices associated with the apprenticeship of wage labour, but which instead are based on more individualised positions within peer group cultures.

youthopia has the implication of less bread and more circuses

The original 'casuals' are a good case in point. To be looked up to as a big name amongst your friends meant you had to wear big name clothes – the most expensive kinds of Italian sports and knitwear. Since you were on the dole and could no afford to buy them, you obviously had t steal them. The more expensive the item the more closely guarded they were, th more skill and daring had to be shown i nicking them. Every casual cultivates a 'individual look' based on permutations o the style, and partly because the clothes ar so unisex, girls have an equal opportunit to shine. Perhaps because of the high ris factor a safer variant has recently evolved known as 'jekylling'. This consists o simply nicking the *labels* off the clothe (with a pair of scissors, or two meta blades) and then stitching them on t cheaper garments bought from Marks 'r Sparks. Jekyll and Hyde is probably a good image for the working class casual since the cultivation of delinquent status i well concealed under the clean cut appear ance of the clothes. The last thing that an of them looks is unemployed.

As this example shows, 'life style experi mentation' can be a long word for som very short and very ambiguous practices Some of the casuals might be making a dent in the profit margins of some retai stores (though they aren't about to brin capitalism to its knees). They may even b playing creatively with commodity form (though jekylling is hardly an attack o exchange value). But in so far as they se out to enjoy their status of adult consum ers, without taking part in social produc tion, then they are either making the bes of no job, or wanting to have it both ways depending on your moral standpoint.

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Youth unemployment

Contrary to the claims of the youthopians, youth unemployment is not politicising youth cultures, it is merely enlarging their function, giving a new significance to style. Because the previous route from school to work has been blocked, minor differences in fashion and culture appear to assume ever-greater importance in the lives and aspirations of young people. But to elevate the way that young people adapt to unemployment into worthy political principles in themselves, as the youthopian argument does, can have reactionary consequences.

young England only shows its face when it riots

The demand for the right *not* to work provides yet more ammution for the Tory press and its endless campaigns against work-shy scroungers on the dole. Moreover the majority of young people continue to demand the impossible in the form of a decent well-paid job. Secondly, youthopian prescriptions normalise unemployment, and tend to encourage individualistic solutions in a way which helps give Thatcherism an almost human face. There is no shortage of programmes in 'leisure counselling' or 'life style enhancement' designed to teach a mixture of creative and entrepreneurial skills and persuade kids that what is practiced for pleasure can be practiced for profit. Translated into actual policy youthopia has the implication of less bread and more circuses, or as someone unkindly put it, jobs for the clowns.

But perhaps the most serious objection is that it is using a middle-class frame of reference to understand working-class survival tactics which proceed from very different premises. In the dominant, bourgeois version of the life-cycle, youth, coinciding with studenthood, means a liberating period of self-expression prior to settling down into the more sober routines of professional advancement and career. But does 'youth' mean the same thing to the other young England of the working class unemployed? Are they undergoing a similar experience of liberation and self-awareness, as the youthopians argue?

An interesting test case is the recent large-scale migration of 16- to 20-year-olds to seaside towns, where they lived in boarding houses and continued to draw supplementary benefit. Was the so-called *Costa del Dole* an example of youthopia in action? It certainly forced the government to intervene, and to introduce new legislation which outlawed the practice, in blatant contravention of human rights. The Tories' attempt to make youth unemployment illegal, by forcing young people either to live at home and go on YTS, or move from town to town in search of work, looks as if it has failed. But was the mass exodus to the seaside part of a search for a permanent way of life based on youthopian pleasure principles? Was it a protest against the protestant work ethic? The evidence suggests otherwise. These young people had found a way of escaping from the dependence and constraints of family life, and enjoying some kind of autonomy not linked to the wage. But most of them made it clear that they regarded this as a temporary expedient, and also a way of combining a holiday with the search for work. For it is worth remembering that the economy of seaside towns still requires a seasonal influx of unskilled casual labour to staff its hotel, catering and entertainment trades.

What the *Costa del Dole* represented, in fact, was an improvised variant on a traditional stage in the young worker's life, where the apprentice left home to live in digs, preferably in another town. It is this carving out of new responses from old traditions which characterises the most hopeful aspect of growing up working class at the present time. For in improvising new kinds of cultural apprenticeship, some of the more patriarchal elements of the previous lifestyles are also challenged.

If boys are no longer able to follow their father's footsteps into manual work, or even wage labour, girls are no longer so willing to follow their mothers into marriage. If boys can no longer offer the prospect of a family wage, then single motherhood appears a far more attractive proposition, offering them the possibility of a council house, and some real independence, while still remaining part of a supportive social network of family and friends.

Where does this leave the 'lads'? Back where they have always been most at home, on the streets with their 'mates'. But now with a difference, for what was once a temporary adventure playground has become all too often a home for those without a home. No wonder they opted for the *Costa del Dole*.

A ghetto is made

It is among the long-term unemployed that the problems and the possibilities are concentrated. Are they the true picture of the future? And if so do their responses give grounds for optimism or despair?

There are those who argue that long-term youth unemployment is creating a new urban under-class, a permanent reserve army, with its own distinctive subculture and way of life outside the official political and economic framework of society. This other, young England only shows its face when it riots, whether on the soccer terraces, or on the streets of the

Dedicated followers of fashion - 1960's Carnaby Street look (right) and Southend, 1985 (left).

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inner-city. For the rest of the time it is invisible, and since the 1981 riots, a great deal of public resources have been devoted to ensuring that as far as possible it stays that way. That is why the recent events in Handsworth and elsewhere have been such a short sharp shock. All that 'sensitive' community policing, all that money spent on youth centres and community facilities, not to mention social research, has evidently been in vain.

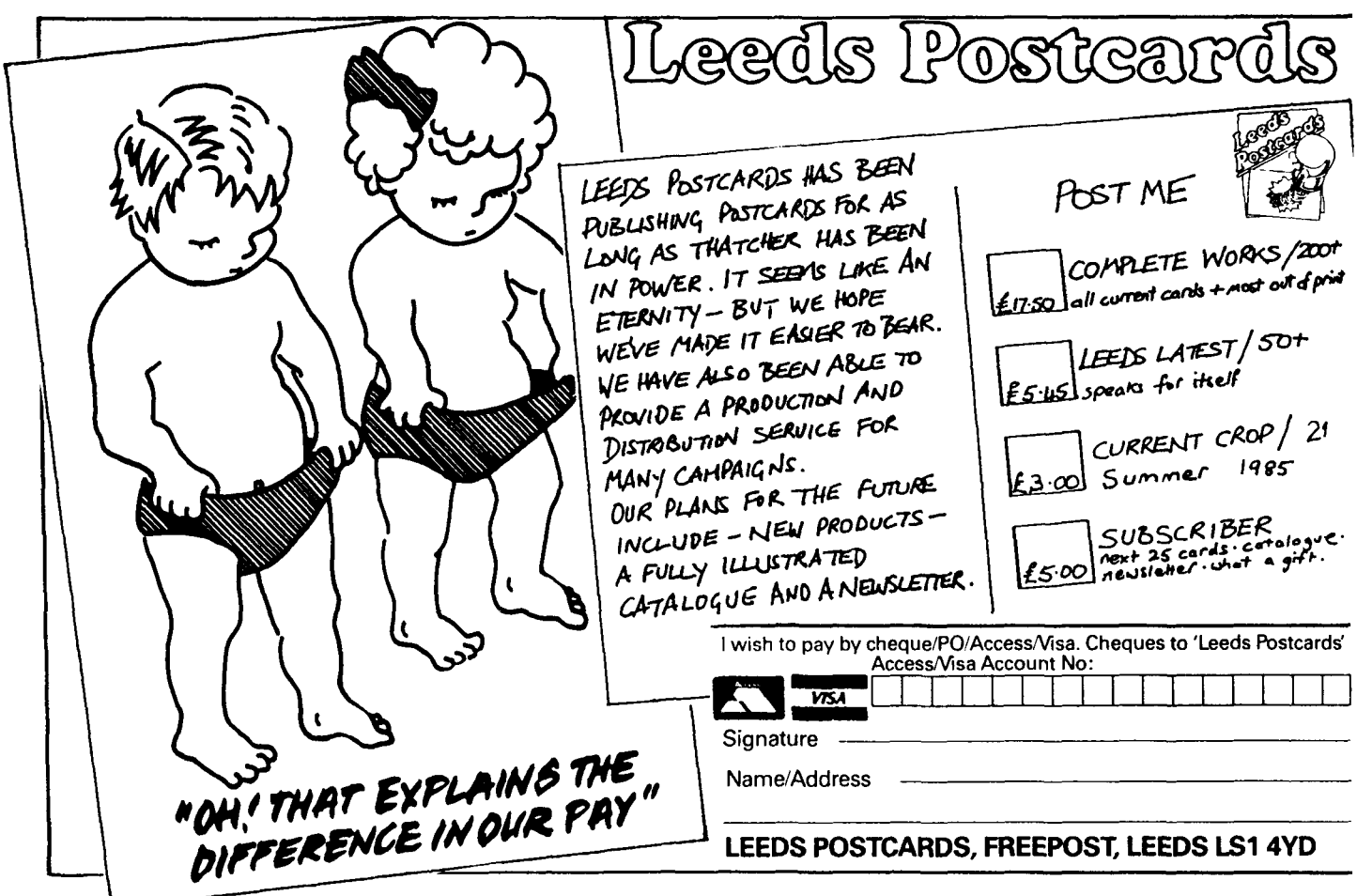
The riots do more than crystallise the great fear of the bourgeoisie. They focus the split perceptions of the Left. Take, for example, the double standard displayed in analysing the riots. There is bad rioting which is done by predominantly white soccer fans and has nasty nationalist or racialist undertones. And there is good rioting, which is done predominantly by young blacks, and which is a protest against racism. There is, however, the somewhat awkward fact that the same people are involved in both kinds of activity, and that it mobilises many of the same cultural forms – notably masculine rituals of territoriality.

It is not therefore a simple question of goodies versus baddies, of heroic victims of circumstance fighting against Thatcherite thugs in uniform. In so far as the Handsworth riots represent a genuine popular uprising, they obviously involve a whole range of elements within the community, the organised and the disorganised, those who are politically motivated, as well as those with an eye to the main chance of some rich pickings.

> if boys can no longer offer the prospect of a family wage, then single motherhood appears a far more attractive proposition

As for the causes, it would be as daft to argue that the riots have nothing to do with unemployment because no-one was walking round with placards demanding jobs, as it is to suggest that they were just an outburst of anger directed at the police because, as usual, it was an attempted arrest which sparked the trouble off. The fact is that unemployment does force a minority of young people, black and white, into forms of petty crime which are also anti-social. But the fact also is that the police harrass and criminalise large numbers of young people for activities which do no-one any harm, and which are a legitimate expression of their culture and community. The problem is that these two factors interact to reinforce each other; the anti-social aspects of street crime allow the police to gain support from community elders, for a policing strategy which continues to regard all youth but especially black youth, as a prime suspect category this in turn leads to street confrontations which provide cover for those whose survival tactics include preying on the weaker members of their own community. This then enables the Tory press to misrepresent the actions of young people in defending their communities against racist attacks, either by the police or the National Front, as the work of a criminal element. And the overall result is to lock almost all sections of the inner city working class into a chronic position of defensive marginality: that is how the ghetto is made.

However it does not help to understand the situation, or to improve it, to define this position as that of an underclass; such a view precisely fails to differentiate between the various social elements in play. The walls of the ghetto are thus made to look more solid than they really are. Even so they would take some tumbling down. It would require a co-ordinated strategy involving a three-pronged attack on youth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unemployment, on policing and on forms of public representation, to unlock the present situation. It is not clear where such an initiative could come from; certainly not from inner city Labour parties in their present state of disarray, with their militantly moribund cadres of Young Socialists resolutely opposed to the formation of black sections.

But before a start can be made in formulating a strategy which stands some chance of success, we have to break out of the frozen polarities of Left debate on the youth question.

I have tried to suggest that neither the abourist nor what I have called the youthopian position engage adequately with the subtle ways the majority of school-leavers are renegotiating the terms of working class life-cycles. Instead they seize on specific practices which characterise a minority of young people, misread their meaning by looking at them through historical spectacles and end up with global prescriptions which have no purchase on the real situation.

Some school leavers *are* thoroughly demoralised by the prospect of life on the dole; some *do* seize the opportunity to have a good time. But even those who are all dressed up and have plenty of places to go suffer from many of the same problems as those who stay, depressed, in bed. Some of them would make good social workers, and some of them might make a living 'on the rock n' roll', but no-one in their right mind would suggest that this was the answer for the majority, for the tens of thousands who leave YTS for the dole. The expansion of welfare services and community arts programmes must be argued for on other grounds than that of providing occupational therapy for the unemployed, even though such secondary benefits should not be overlooked.

To prefix the term 'mass' and 'structural' to youth unemployment may have helped to indicate the unprecedented nature and scale of what is happening. But increasingly it has tended to blur perceptions of the young people concerned. The most urgent task for social researchers is to draw a more differentiated picture, one which is not so dependent on crude generalisations about gender, race and class, but which can serve as the basis of a more sensitive strategy of provision[1].

[1] See for example 'Losing the Generation Game' in Curran (ed), *Future of the Left*, Polity Books, 1984. *Rethinking the Youth Question*, Youth and Policy Pamphlet, 1985 (in press) and I Bates *et al.*, *Schooling for the Dole*, Macmillan Youth Question, 1985.

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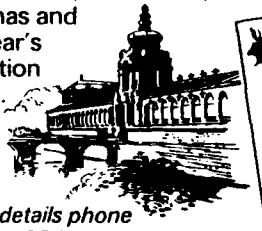

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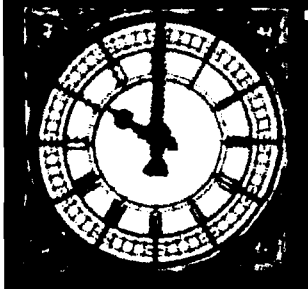

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Letters

LOST COMPASS

Notwithstanding the current heartening and liberating experiments to which Gareth Stedman Jones (*MT* July) appeals as examples of the flexibility of socialism, the technology humanity will inherit will not allow decisive areas of the economy to be based on local co-operatives. Orbiting satellites, sea-bottom mineral mining, desert reclamation, jungle conservation, the conquest of major diseases, are hardly tasks for 'voluntary associational effort' in any envisageable social future.

Discussion of what those decisive areas are likely to consist of and what kind of control over them can be both effective and consistent with democracy, are highly important questions for the labour movement. Socialists who are 'defamiliarised' are those who have thrown away their social compass or are looking in the wrong direction.

Aubrey Lewis, Manchester

APOLITICAL ART

Whilst I think it important to include the occasional major article on the visual arts, I was dismayed that you should choose to look at David Hockney (*MT* August). Simon Watney's article was vague and pointless – it left me wondering what real interest Hockney could have to the majority of *MT* readers. His work is remarkable for its consistent lack of political engagement – other than its earlier exploration of homosexuality.

It is symptomatic of most of your coverage of the visual arts that it is consistently apolitical, for example, your recent review of the British Art Show. As both an artist and an avid reader of *MT*, I feel this is an area you could improve on vastly.

Ken Currie, Glasgow

JUST TRYING

It was instructive to compare the conflicting views of Ferdinand Mount and Gareth Stedman Jones (*MT* July).

Socialism is *not* 'helping the poor' so that they may remain to be exploited by industrialists with the compassion of a piranha. It is the effort to create a society where poverty cannot, and does not exist. It must necessarily require that the rich, and more especially the 'idle' rich, are deprived of privileges acquired by exploiting the weak and the poor.

We may never be able to create a truly just society. We can, however, try. Thatcher has shown us what a just society is *not*. It may take a long time for socialism to succeed but it is the only philosophy which even tries.

Thomas Ferris, Armagh

LACK OF WILL

Live Aid has been criticised by the Left for being insufficiently political. Geldof did however raise political questions. At the end of the Wembley concert he remarked on the fact that no-one had, to his satisfaction, been able to explain why EEC foodstuffs were stockpiled while millions starve.

Groups like ourselves are trying to convert the issue of EEC surpluses into political concern. We have come up against strong resistance from some of our Left colleagues. Denial of the problem, a feeling of being overwhelmed and powerless by the scale of the problem, and a suspicion that Third World famine is not the stuff from which a successful domestic politics can be built, all combine to produce a lack of will to work on the problem.

A strong suspicion also exists that because famine relief has traditionally been the concern of charitable organisations, the issue itself is 'soft' and non-political.

The redirection of EEC resources and all that they symbolise is an attainable political goal, and one which potentially can attract widespread sympathy, support and respect. Now is the time to convert the 'power of will and the politics of conscience' into successful political practice.

Tony Faragher, Against the Grain, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SELFISH AID

David Edgar's review of life after Live Aid (*MT* Sept) arbitrates between reactions sentimental and reactions carping, and favours the former – 'the odd tear creeping into the corner of at least one eye'. Yet a mere glance at Live Aid's implicit assumptions about human nature is enough to ensure that I, for one, remain a carp.

In stark contrast to established charities, which exist only because of personal compassion and private altruism, Live Aid's *raison d'être* was the cynical premise that people are primarily self-centred, uncaring, even callous. Geldof and co chose deliberately to prick consciences and manipulate emotions until donating money was the only way viewers could reduce their media-created guilt. The pop video which starred a dying Ethiopian baby was a particularly repugnant example of this tactic.

The inescapable conclusion seems paradoxical: that the more the viewing public donated to Live Aid, the more intrinsically selfish we revealed ourselves to be. Live Aid was an obscenity – despite its magnificent success – because of what it had to be to succeed.

It is simply obscene that it requires a 15-hour ego-trip by the West's pop millionaires to squeeze money out of the relatively rich in order to stop the absolutely poor starving to death. This, surely, is the sobering lesson both Left and Right must draw from Live Aid's remarkable and tragically necessary achievement.

Stephen Devereux, Oxford

REAPPRAISING SPAIN

Monty Johnstone (*MT* Sept) highlights the mistaken position adopted by the British CP when it sought to defend the Moscow show trials. It also needs to be recognised that these trials coincided with the period in which Stalin sought to determine the outcome of events in Spain.

The decision taken by the Communists in Spain to purge the anarchists and the elimination of the POUM forces, culminating in the murder of Andres Nin, were all events initially inspired by Stalin. For example, Victor Alba, a historian of Catalonian marxism, has reported that three days before Andres Nin was expelled from the Republican government and the purge began, *Pravda* announced that: 'In Catalonia the elimination of Trotskyites and anarcho-syndicalists has begun. It will be carried out with the same energy as it was in the Soviet Union'.

None of these comments are intended to detract from the genuine display of international solidarity commonly associated with members of the British CP. However, as next year marks the 50th anniversary of the start of the civil war in Spain, British Communists are, surely, indebted critically to examine the official Soviet account of this period. If they do so, the future of the British CP would be considerably enhanced.

Gerry Kitchen, Leeds

COPULATING CAMELS

Lucy Bland (*MT* Sept), writing on sex and morals, appears to have totally damaged her case by concentrating on the compulsions and consequences of copulation.

Copulation is the lowest form of 'sexual and moral' expression of which even the desert camel is fully capable. Both Left and Right in the West are trapped in the judaic desert tribal ethics of immaculacy. As we say in Arabic 'give a camel a rose and it will eat it': interminable discussions on the nutritional properties of the rose will not tell us about its beauty.

Deep psychological bonds which unite persons at the most intimate to the most remote situations whether comrades in liberation battles or comrades in emotional male-female partnership are matters for serious thought. The reasons why the women's conference at Nairobi this year treated the Western women with such contempt may be worth looking into and also why the garrulous lesbians were put on a plane back home. The psychological deformities found in women victimised by industrial societies are not badges of honour.

Samiha Qatani, Guildford, Surrey

60s PROMISE

David Edgar (*MT* Sept) made the carping critics, Left and Right, look small. Quite right too. Live Aid was – still is – a remarkable phenomenon.

The promise of 60s rock music fulfilled for one glorious day and night. For Brits though, it also meant a new cultural settlement. The symbolic consolidation of post-punk rock and pop as part of a new national culture – not seen since the Beatles received MBEs.

For the rest of the world, it meant 'oppositional energy' in the form of rock music irreversibly contained in a permanently sealed satellite of youthful Western initiative. The exclusion of many musical forms prevented Live Aid from being a truly internationalist event.

The lack of the diverse but popular new forms of soul music was perhaps the most surprising. The new rock establishment obviously have their own musical tastes but pop music is still full of radical potential. Reggae, avant-garde, folk punk, afro-jazz, even pop's increasing number of dissenting soloists could revitalise the Left and international traditions of popular culture and be inspired in turn, after Live Aid.

Mike Weller, Penge, London

We welcome your letters for the November issue. They should be no longer than 200 words and arrive at the office not later than October 3. The editor reserves the right to cut letters.

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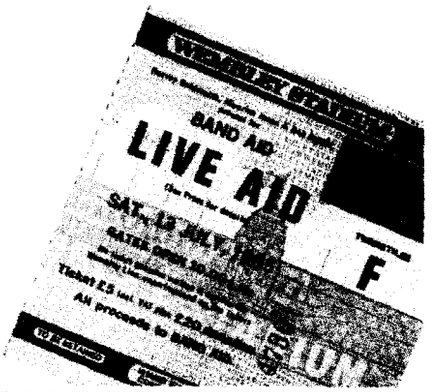
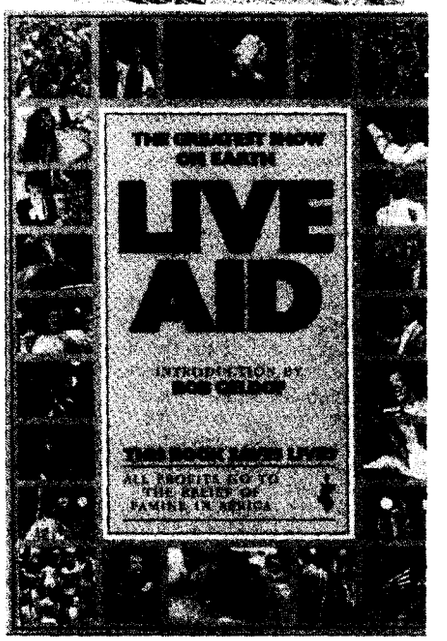
VIEWPOINT

The Global Juke Box?

SIMON FRITH
Geldof's crusade





Everyone agrees that thanks to Bob Geldof's initiative and the fans' response, millions of pounds have been raised for Ethiopian famine relief; the question is what the Geldof crusade means for Britain. What's at issue in the argument about Live Aid is not the effect of charity but the meaning of a show.

Why this displacement from the politics of aid to the politics of pop? Partly because so many of Wembley's reporters, unaccustomed to rock, were overwhelmed by the day's emotionalism. But stadium shows are always emotional – Bob Geldof's genius has been to harness pop stars' skills at creating 'community' to charitable ends. The critical task is not to wallow in such emotionalism, but to examine how it works. Think, for example, of the different collective codes used on Band Aid's *Don't They Know It's Christmas*, a sentimental, British, singalong Xmas hit, and USA for Africa's *We Are The World*, a black pop record exploiting the shared vocal commitment of gospel.

It's unarguable that the Wembley concert produced a powerful sense of community. The problem is what this community meant. David Edgar claims it for the Left by reference to right-wing writers' unease. This is to equate 'the Right' with a group of *Spectator* intellectuals whose hostility to mass culture was established many years ago by Paul Johnson's contempt for Beatles' fans. Such disdain for popular taste is, though, quite irrelevant to the activities of the really important right-wing ideologues, the cultural capitalists who shape popular taste in the first place.

Live Aid was a populist event, a public account of Britishness like Charles' and Di's wedding. What was being celebrated was success. The criterion for admission to the stage was not rock and roll fervour nor even sales as such, but, as David Toop pointed out in *The Face*, the right recognition quotient – hence the appearance of all those over-the-hill 70s superstars, the absence of black Britons or reggae acts or anyone with 'minority' appeal.

There were good reasons for this fame game. Live Aid was a TV event and the acts had to grab the worldwide audience immediately. The show was a sustained television advertisement and its very success confirmed rock's integration into a particular sort of commercial process. Whatever the sniffy response of *The Spectator* lot, Live Aid had an instant place in The *Sun*/Radio 1/*Smash Hits* mythology – 'Bob Geldof,' as Eamon Andrews announced many months ago: 'this is your life'.

The point is not that Live Aid didn't have the sort of rock n'roll utopianism that Edgar expresses so stirringly, but that this utopianism is embedded in consumer capitalism. Edgar describes Live Aid as a reassertion of 60s ideology. 60s nostalgia I'd call it. What was moving about the day was the coming together of the successful 60s middle classes, fans and stars, to proclaim their continued idealism.

It was as if, after 10 years on the defensive, they were finally seeing off punk: spending money *can* be a form of moral righteousness.

A week later a different segment of the 60s generation gathered for the WOMAD festival. Here the counter-culture really lived: sex and drugs and small trade, anarchism, ecology and a view of the Third World as a source of wisdom, political example and cultural wealth, rather than as an object of pity. 'Send your money in!' beseeched Bob Geldof, 'or Africans will die'. 'Thanks to Africa,' went the Womad message, 'we can make music. Where else did rock n' roll con from?'

David Edgar asks what the Left c learn from Live Aid. My answer nothing. Let us just be heartened by h much Live Aid learned from the Left. was a year of miners' benefits (seve years of GLC shows) which made charity record and concert the obvio answer to Bob Geldof's starting questio 'What can we do?' (And it doesn't ta much cynicism to suggest that reco companies, Fleet Street pop columni and the more head-in-the-sand pop st welcomed the chance to do good 'unpol cally'. What the rock Left realised lo ago is that the difficulty is to make p utopianism something more than a c

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umer gesture. There's a problem of scale local benefits are a much better source of roup activity (political and musical) than ig concerts, but the latter raise more ioney.

Edgar is right to suggest that pop music s the only mass medium that still carries adical messages. He's wrong to imply iat this is the result of some sort of pontaneous class or age consciousness. 'he political use of music has meant long ears of hard work and idealistic en- eavour (emerging more obviously from ie 70s and Rock Against Racism than the 0s). Live Aid drew on this idealism and ave it a huge public presence which may, s Edgar suggests, have embarrassed 'hatcher. But it also confined it, defined op activism as consumption, something iat suits capital all too well. The Band .id project was the best possible way to iake money out of music for famine elief, but to celebrate it as good cultural olitics is to take one step forward and wo steps back.

MARK PERRYMAN
Beyond Lennonism

David Edgar was one of the few left ommentators to concern him/herself ith Live Aid. Most significantly, he did t least attempt to develop some strategic onception of 'Life beyond Live Aid'. lowever, the game was well and truly iven away when *The Guardian* reprinted dgar's article and changed the title to How Live Aid revived the 60s message'. David Edgar is quite simply an un- shamedly ageing rockist. He continuous- harks back to the 'Good Old Days', ie, ie 60s, and in particular, Woodstock. or the benefit of the 68 generation, I'd ist like to remind them that Woodstock ook place 16 years ago. This isn't just oint-scoring in the credibility stakes, but David Edgar does ask for it when he onjures up a forward-looking socialist ision, 1968! The Left has this obsession ith looking backwards, it's about time e looked forward . . .

To map out a politico-cultural future eeds more than fond memories, and I ould suggest it requires three particular ontributions that were clearly lacking om David Edgar's article. Firstly, whilst e have been quietly dropping (and some us, not so quietly) the strictures of eninism, our cultural sugar-daddies/ ummies have still got this big hang-up ith *Lennonism*. Nostalgia has got its place but it can never take centre-stage. Instead, we need avant-guardism, a cultural practice that breaks barriers, attracts those at the edges of their respective cultural spaces, is exciting and fearlessly challenges the present.

Secondly, such a practice must be pluralist. Edgar gives his rockism away (along with his sex, race and age) when he states: 'rock and roll music – the only popular form with the faintest radical credentials that has ever gained significant purchase in the working class'. What about its avowed maleness, its attempted exclusion of women, except as performing/spectating accessories? What about its racism, that enabled it to rob and exploit so many black musicians and writers? And, most importantly, how about the radicalism of other musical forms with a mass audience; specifically reggae and soul. These are mass cultures every bit as radical as rock (and similarly flawed by sexism) but not treated as such by the Left. And by ignoring their significance we neatly mirror Geldof's excluding of major reggae and soul acts from *his* show. A politico-cultural future must be informed by both feminism and anti-racism, must challenge heterosexism and be accessible to people of all ages. These are not optional extras, but fundamentals.

Thirdly, the interventions that are seeking to create this future must be mass-based. We must engage the media with a new spirit of self-publicism. But this, in itself, cannot wish away decades of demobilisation. To build mass movements we have to empower people, there is all the difference in the world between an audience and a collectivity.

These three pillars are inseparable, each in itself could easily degenerate into yet another brand of exclusivism. But these aren't just critical musings, they could underpin an immediate project that is urgently needed. A series of massive events that seek to culturally project an anti-racist alternative to apartheid South Africa. Such a project requires the musical, artistic, dramatic, and many other skills of the avant-guardists, it demands a pluralism that opposes apartheid by engaging the racism of our own cultures, and can only succeed by empowering its initial audience into a collective anti-racist force. In short, a heady mix of a hegemonic project with a dash of the cult of activism.

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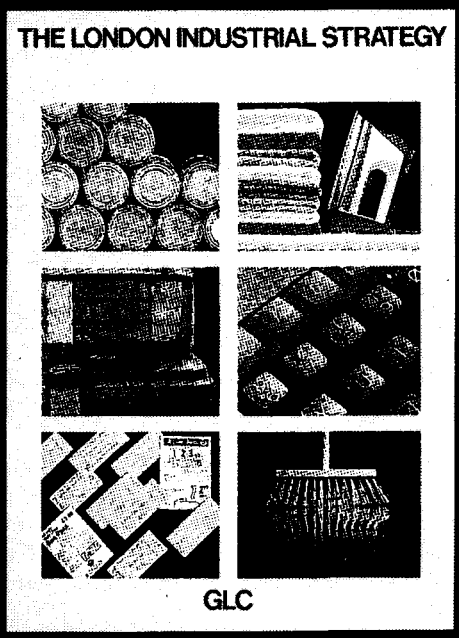

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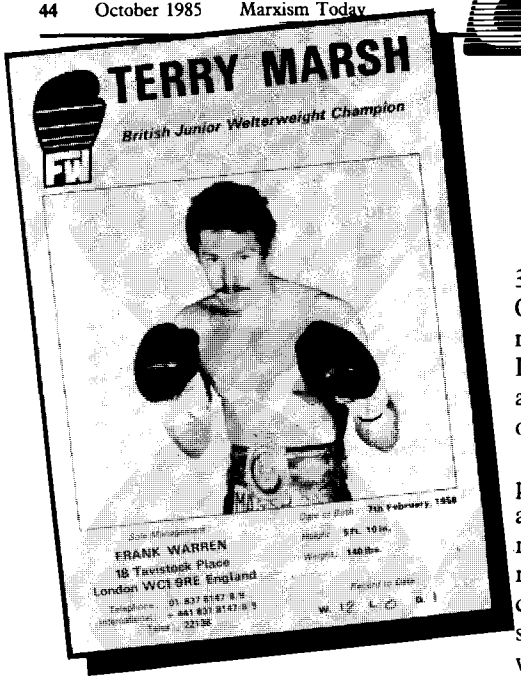
CHANNELS

THE HARDEST GAME OF ALL

Jeff Randall



The 1980s have been a golden era for British boxing. This month, Pat Cowdell aims to become our seventh world champion in five years when he challenges for the featherweight title. Two other home boxers – Colin Jones and Terry Marsh – are in line for world title shots early next year. Yet this success has been accompanied by a campaign of criticism in the press, and a call from the British Medical Association for the sport's abolition.

Not many of Britain's industries have prospered since Mrs Thatcher came to power six years ago. But her time in office has coincided with a remarkable renaissance in the fortunes of British professional boxing. Since the turn of the decade, the number of registered professional boxers in this country has nearly doubled to around 550. And it is not just a question of quantity. The rising tide of unemployment has been accompanied by a marked improvement in the quality of domestic fighters, such that standards are now higher than at any time since the last war.

The facts speak for themselves. In the 1980s Britain has had six world champions at six different weights. During the same period, seven other British boxers have made unsuccessful attempts at winning world titles. The sport's rehabilitation as a major spectator draw was confirmed in June when Barry McGuigan fought his way to the world featherweight title before a packed Loftus Road stadium and the biggest TV audience of the month – even *Coronation Street* had to take a back seat. McGuigan's dazzling victory captured the public's imagination in a way no other British boxing triumph has done for 30 years. Even the much loved Henry Cooper never enjoyed the intensity of media attention now focusing on the little Irishman, whose style brings out the best aspects of the fight game: a combination of raw courage and rare skills.

Yet the brilliance of McGuigan's performance should not overshadow the achievements of other less talented, but no less meritorious, British boxers in recent years. Jim Watt's four successful defences of his world lightweight title stand out; as does Alan Minter's effort when winning the middleweight crown against an American boxer in the US.

Unfortunately, behind this impressive list of triumphs there lies a record of a grimmer kind: the precipitous decline of Britain's economy. As the dole queues have lengthened, more and more working class kids have been forced to seek unconventional ways out of the mire. Professional boxing is unmistakably one of these; and it has blossomed amidst the worst recession for 50 years.

At the grass roots level amateur boxing in this country is organised on club lines. These offer kids with time on their hands a place to go, somewhere to socialise, and more often than not a sense of identity. Clubs like Repton in London's East End and St Helens in the northwest have seen numbers of new members nearly double. For many, they represent a way out of the nihilistic urban culture which so often leads unemployed adolescents to crime or self-destruction with the needle. There are thousands of amateur boxers in Britain who have no intention of ever turning professional. For them, the reward comes from the training, the self-discipline and the *esprit de corps*. The shadow of excessive brutality and exploitation which may at times darken certain aspects of professional boxing is hard to find in the amateur game. That said, for the successful amateur, the lure of a professional contract is often hard to refuse.

Boxing has been called 'the hardest game of all'. And so it is. At no time does it offer easy money. To get to the top and stay there requires monk-like dedication to training beforehand, limitless courage in the ring, and an ability to sidestep the distractions which success inevitabl brings. But for those who make it, ther are pay-days, the likes of which mos working class men never see in a whol lifetime of regular employmen McGuigan, a former shop assistan scheduled to defend his title on 2 September, will earn £4m if he wins hi next two fights. Colin Jones, erstwhil gravedigger, raked in around £750,00 from his three unsuccessful attempts a winning the world welterweight titl These are earnings from boxing alon Endorsements and promotions can doubl the sums involved. Henry Cooper is sti being well paid for his association wit products like Brut and Jaffa oranges 1 years after his boxing career ended.

Of course not all boxers can be worl title contenders. But even at the brea and butter end of the sport, circu professionals can earn £10,000-£15,00 per year. For those facing years o inactivity on state benefits, that's a lot o money. There is also the hope of being somebody, of achieving something – a escape from the bottom of Britain's soci pile. It's interesting that since 1980 the has been a black British champion i every one of the top six boxing divisio from heavyweight to light-welterweight.

Yet at a time when the sport popularity in Britain is at a postwar peal it is under fierce attack on two front First there are those who find distasteful because of its undoubted clos association with social deprivation: 'Ho can a sport which thrives only in times o hardship be a good thing?' summaris their objections. The answer is that to ba boxing is merely to eradicate the sympto in the hope that the cause will go awa Measles are not cured by powdering ov the spots. A more threatening campaig against boxing is led by the Britis Medical Association supported by se tions of the liberal media. The BMA case, quite simply, is that the sport dangerous – far too dangerous to b allowed in a society which claims to b civilised.

Professional boxing in this country monitored by the British Boxing Board Control. There are strict regulations protect a boxer's welfare inside ar

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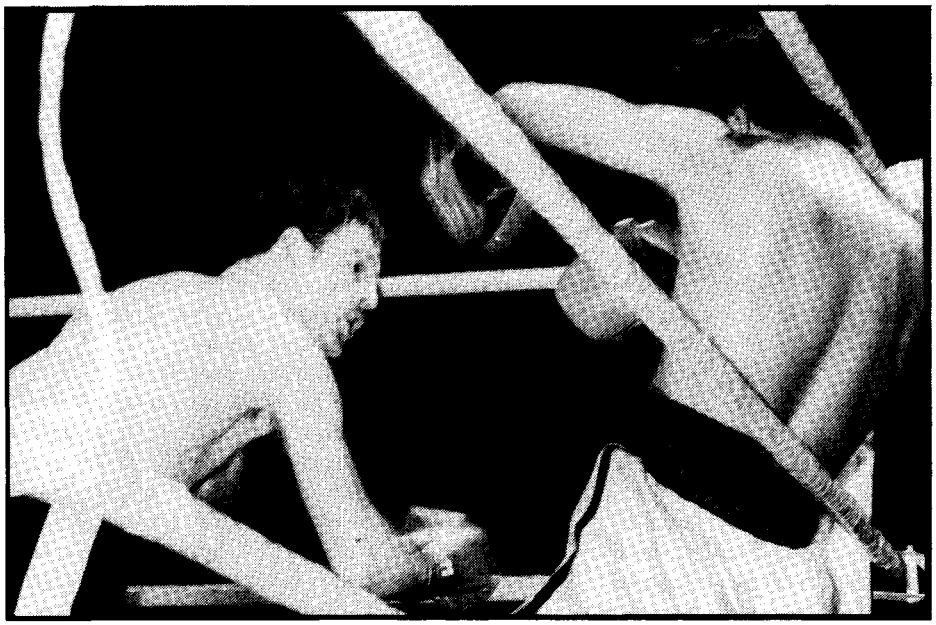
utside the ring. The Board licenses all ghters, and has the power to withdraw a cence if it is unhappy with a boxer's ealth or fight record. Heavyweight hampion David Pearce recently had his areer terminated by Board doctors who ared that another fight could aggravate n old eye injury.

Nevertheless, boxing is a dangerous ame. Fighters have died in the ring; thers suffer brain damage as a result of ne punch too many. The sport involves sks – who can deny it? But is that reason ban it? At the professional level, its articipants choose to take those risks ather than be denied the opportunity to etter themselves. And when there are so any other dangerous sports around – otor racing and mountaineering both aim lives almost every year – why is it at boxing alone has been the subject of much criticism from the BMA. Could be because boxing's participants and ectators come almost exclusively from e working class?



Pat Cowdell, Alexandra Palace, 28 May.

If the BMA's campaign succeeds, and boxing is banned as it is in Sweden, all that will happen is that the sport will be driven underground where adequate controls and safety standards will become luxuries of the past.

PAUL WELLER: Style Counsellor

Mark Perryman

aul Weller has been a rising star ever nce, through sheer endurance, he nerged as the 'head-boy' of punk's Class 76. Whilst the Sex Pistols split, the lash effectively retired, and the Damned llapsed into harmless self-parody, the suited Weller led his threesome, the m, on to better times.

In many ways, the Jam were the finest ritish band since the Beatles; they were so mplete – able to evoke fond memories of e early Who and, at the same time, rash out the youth-anthems with punk's nest. They were a suburban going-ncern, tightly-knit and full of collective ergy. Their unform of Italian suits, tton-down shirts and narrow ties stood em out from the bondaged crowds of the te 70s but their furious leaps and manic livery of their early anthem, *In the City*, ove them into the hearts of the ousands who preferred their punk rebel-n shorn of its art-school pretensions.

As the years sped by, punk fell apart as a herent movement along with its political asterpiece – 'Rock against Racism'. Wel-, always the most apolitical of punk's okespersons, notorious for his infamous d vote Tory' quote, marked punk's wnfall with the ironically titled album, *l Mod Cons*. On it he surpassed the ccato sloganising of his more forthright ers and produced a subtle line in poli-s. He weaved his positions around fine-

ly-crafted storylines, reaching his peak on *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight*, which spoke of inner city deprivation, the isolation and fear of suburban youth and the aura of white male violence which is the breeding-ground of the fascist Right.

Going Underground went straight into the singles chart at No 1; the Jam had finally arrived but Weller was already showing his dissatisfaction with his new-found status. As yet another mod revival stalked the nation, he appeared on *Top of the Pops* in a kitchen apron. What mod would be fool enough to latch on to this post-parka fashion craze?

The albums still appeared at a fairly furious rate, *Setting Sons* being a concept album, loosely based around an English Civil War. *Sound Affects* featured quotes from Shelley, while the final studio album, *The Gift* marked a decisive shift towards a brassy soul sound. Weller was clearly unhappy with the contradiction of being a soul afficionado trapped in a strictly traditional rock threepiece, more fundamentally his lyrical themes were oddly counterposed – on the one hand, a fierce national pride and on the other, a longing for world unity, epitomised by the track *Trans-global Unity Express*.

He found his way out by breaking up the Jam, biding his time, then reappearing with the Style Council. The new band were rapidly established beginning with a spate of hit singles, and then with a solid roster of live work.

The Style Council put a heavy emphasis on visual appearance and packaging. The fashions have varied from city-slickers to Euro-chic. But the main feature of the group is the very close relationship between Weller and his new compatriot,

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Mick Talbot. Unlike the days of the Jam when Weller was always streaks ahead of his sidekicks, Talbot is very much Weller's equal and in some of the videos, notably *Solid Bond*, appears to play Arthur Daley to Weller's Terry McCann. Mick Talbot is very much the big-city wide-boy, right down to chewing matches and sticking a betting ticket in the brim of his hat.

On the *à Paris* EP, the highlight of pop's Summer of 83, the Council made it clear they were ready for some new horizons. A funk bass-line accompanied a superb love-song, whilst D C Lee's live vocals on *Paris Match* suggested what was to become a major new direction, jazz.

The EP marked an important new stage in Weller's career; he was happy with the freedom to experiment; the spirit was still angry but more controlled and directed – he was embracing a more optimistic mood which reflected his new-found confidence in dealing with a wider range of lyrical concerns. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the heavily continental turn in presentation, Paul Weller was still quite obviously the fresh-faced Englishman abroad, dogged by his fierce national pride.

The band's debut album, *Cafe Bleu*, released in only 1984, highlighted the continental mood, heavy in its emphasis on instrumental and almost fickle in its rapid turnover of musical styles. The album sold well but served to confuse the critics. Weller was clearly trying to transcend the limitations of a rock group based solely around him. He brought in a wide range of guest musicians, and on stage, the Style Council was more like an orchestra than anything Weller had been associated with before. The result was, frankly, clumsy, but the motivation was painfully sincere – a real attempt at a collective piece of work. The problem is, and remains, that whatever Weller involves himself in, he is so obviously the driving force. By no means a musical giant, and hardly a sex-symbol, he remains a potent performer with the self-confessed ability 'to be direct without necessarily being obvious'.

The combination doesn't always add up. The recent hit *Walls come tumbling down*, opened with a predictable diatribe topped off with the cliché-ridden 'You don't have to take this crap. . .' But on his album, Weller shows he has the proven ability to combine tales of homelessness, drug abuse, police violence, community decline and YTS into a worthwhile collection of songs with something new to say. In many ways, it is as the 'Collector', as he appears on the inner sleeve of the album, that Weller is best summed up – a collector of tales of woe backed up with an up-beat of disparate pedigree.

The collective feel of the band itself only goes so far; Talbot is clearly treated as an equal but the drummer is faintly patronised as a young upstart, a reminder of Weller's past. As for Weller's co-vocalist, D C Lee, she hardly earns a mention in the very male world of the latter-day modernist. Paul Weller is often seen as a miserable soul; a more succinct observation would be of a very visible presence, devoid of sexual intrigue. Weller and Talbot are the boys about town; women ar treated as accessories and props, certainl not to be incorporated into the Styl Council project. This may be somewha harsh but a quick comparison with th massive leap forward made by the ma who toppled Weller from the top of th music press's popularity polls, Morrisey (the Smiths, is enough to convince. Welle has stepped ahead of his puritanical imit tors, such as the redskins – full of mach white soul-thrash – but his songs sti mainly present women as objects, not a people, and his stage show is strictly for th boys.

Of late, Paul Weller's politics have bee taking a more substantive form. Presider of the International Youth Year, a regul at benefits for the miners, he has als donated thousands of pounds to Yout CND. His criticism of pop's tempora infatuation with the wonders of chari merited a second look because, unlike th sneering commentators of pop's very ow left-field, he actually took the time (ar the stick) to play on Band Aid, notwit standing his suspicions. A more tentati relationship has sprung up with th Labour Party particularly through th Militant-inspired 'Youth Trade Unic Rights campaign'. Neil Kinnock clear has ambitions for the youth vote that f outstrip the conspiratorial world of the f left and his break with political pomposi has brought him a *New Musical Expre* front cover and a headlining tour by Bil Bragg for the 'Jobs and Industry' car paign. Most of Weller's pop allies rema committed on a single-issue basis which certainly worthy but full of unhappy cor plexities. Witness the ideological some saults performed when Wham! turned o for the miners. Club Tropicana à la Scarg (of Yorkshire Miner Pin-up Fam anyone?

Weller, on his recent tour, was bold proclaiming: 'The Labour Party is the on alternative to the Tories', before divi headlong into a criticism of rhetori careerism, corruption and fence-sittin What Weller is clearly after is an excitir and innovative brand of youth politic developed by youth autonomously. This what sussed-out pop has always been i fatuated with. The Labour Party, howe er, remains wedded to a narrow lea ership-power role based on educating youthful supporters, not learning fro them. Weller fits uneasily into such fractured relationship; a vitriolic campai ner, full of suspicion and commitment.

With Neil Kinnock at IYY Launch, 'A Fair Deal for Youth', May 1985.

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Style, especially in the politically-harged lyrical world of Paul Weller, is far ıore than a cosmetic surface. He under-:ands its complexities and is equally at ome in *Smash Hits* or *Sanity*. His style merges from a firm, but due to his op-world exclusion, fairly simplistic poli-tical base. Musically, he is still after a seal of distinction, neatly echoed by the band's own logo 'Keeps on Burning'. Paul Weller is not forming any new ground in the sense of Jerry Dammers or New Order; he's not representing a new development in a worthwhile tradition such as Working Week's efforts with jazz. But in the words of his alter-ego, 'The Cappucino Kid', he does represent 'a growing up with a 70s feeling for life, love and ambition'. For those politically constructed beyond the heady hippy days of 1968, Paul Weller remains someone to be reckoned with.

YUPPIE CULTURE

Richard Dyer

he term 'yuppie' first came to promi-ence during last year's US presidential ımpaign. At the time it seemed, from ıis side of the Atlantic, a mere sociologic- category, a particular demographic ·oup – young urban (or upwardly obile) professionals. They were said to : important because observers wondered hich way they would go. Well, now we ıow – they went for Reagan (only the acks and Jews didn't). Indeed, they are .e face – but not the heart and soul – of eagan's America.

Curiously enough it is hard to find ·ople who think of themselves as ıppies. Yuppies are always *other* people. he label is a construction, produced mewhere between journalism and ·ephology. Yet yuppiedom is there, a ›tent image, a potent visible lifestyle at is widely taken to characterise US ciety today.

Yuppie culture is what life looks like in e big US city centres – in gentrified der quarters, in warehouses turned into arkets (à la Covent Garden, Britain's ost yuppie invention), in restaurants, ubs and shops. Only black culture – p-hop, ghetto blasters, street rapping, e larger part of cinema audiences – is as sibly present, and in glaring contrast to ıppie culture's affluent materialism.

The fact that yuppiedom is taken as ıaracterising this America is itself ;nificant. It implies that what is now pical for Americans is the experience of fluence, upward mobility, and the :edom of lifestyle. Given the implacabil-' with which Reaganomics returns illions to poverty, blocks off job ›portunities, undermines trade union-n, it is quite appalling to see the media ling over themselves in attempts to capture, define and analyse yuppiedom as *the* sign of the times.

The yuppie image also corners the market on notions of youth subcultures. Hip-hop does get reported still, but otherwise shops, movies, TV programmes, magazines, anything clearly offering itself as youth-oriented suggest that young people are yuppies. Objectively, this obviously isn't so – Reaganomics is no respecter of youth. But it may work subjectively – if the only image of how to be that you can see around you is yuppiedom, then you may find it difficult to develop more edgy, uppity, rebellious styles.

Politically, yuppies are said to be conservative in economics and liberal on 'issues': they support Reagan's policies on cutting taxes, government spending and economic controls, but do not support his conservative rhetoric on personal standards and behaviour. That is why yuppies are the face but not the heart of Reagan's America. They are what you see, or what the media make you think you see, but they do not respond to the emotional appeals of Reagan. However shallow and empty his version of them, Reagan does appeal to feelings of pride in one's country, rugged individualism, traditional family-based morality. And yuppies don't go for this. Yuppies are almost by definition unmarried and intent on staying that way, or at least being childless. They generally support the pro-choice lobby on abortion, are not homophobic, don't mind about drugs and favour most kinds of consensual sexual freedom.

This liberalism is not surprising when one considers two of the sources of the yuppie lifestyle – hippies and gay men. From the hippies, yuppies derive their openness to drug experience, their fondness for old fashioned clothes, and, especially, their style in food, a mix of southeast Asian, vegetarian, macro-biotic and 'traditional American' cuisines. Yuppie culture gets its stylishness from the traditional urban culture of gay men: it is from areas of retailing developed by gay men – clothes, hairdressing, interior decoration, flowers – that yuppies buy much of their style. Yuppie styles in dress and body language express a playful

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attitude towards sex roles clearly drawn in part from gay culture, while their rejection of family, procreative sexuality is both gay and hippy. There is something of feminism in this too, but I emphasise the gay and hippy traditions because of the hedonism, the commitment to pleasure, so central to both.

Pleasure for hippy and gay culture was an almost visionary concept. Hippies saw in drugs, flowers, rock music and flowing clothes a freedom from the restricted, cramped, driven quality of straight life. Giving a different inflection to the word 'straight', gays too saw in sexuality, disco, cross-dressing and camp a liberation from the straightjacket of rigid gender roles and family functions. (Some of this visionary quality may look naive now – AIDS has been particularly challenging to the celebration of sexuality in both traditions.) Yet for all that there was a vision of something better, an idea of pleasure as a means of release from the shackles of capitalism and patriarchy, from the way we live now.

There is nothing of this in what remains of the hippie and gay traditions in yuppiedom. It is a hedonism, but not a visionary or transcendent one. Yuppie culture is in this sense 'post-modern' – form without feeling, culture without commitment, manners without meaning. Yuppiedom raids the past for styles that are then cut adrift from the culture and history that gave rise to them, drained of their rich sediment of meaning and association, robbed above all of the subversive edge that sought change and transformation.

Yuppie culture knows about 'the modern'. It understands, for instance, the argument that bourgeois culture is not natural but a construction of the rich – but it doesn't care. Indeed, when asked what they want, yuppies reply 'money'. Asked what they want to be, they say 'rich'. Not for them the intoxications of power, the rewards of interesting work, the joys of dropping out. They don't even seem that fixated on the pleasures that money can bring. It's the stuff itself they want. Theirs is a soul-less hedonism, a materialism that is not only not dialectical, but not sensuous or sensual either.

It's not surprising then that yuppies are untroubled by questions of who gets money and who doesn't, whether some having money doesn't imply many not having it. Their commitment to money certainly supports Reagan's policies, as their votes showed. Yet their relentless hedonism may yet prove a problem to Reagan. Not being the heart of Reaganism, yuppies are not over-impressed by demands that some of their earnings should go to support adventurism in Central America. Lacking Reagan's idealism, (however phoney we may judge it), lacking too any sense of the connectedness of a pleasurable lifestyle and the economic organisation of society, they are also disinclined to get too worked up about communism. What's it to them if some peasants want to have – or even have forced upon them – a commie government? They've got their clubs and salads and jogging suits. Not only does their complete lack of any ideals, left or right, make them an enemy of all kinds of government spending, but even more they would not fancy a war which might involve their being drafted.

Yuppies are the palpable atmostphere of 80s conservatism. Day to day it's ni to have all this excellent food, pleasing see these fun clothes. It's a relief too feel that these young, successful peopl people who will have a lot of power in tl future, are not going to support a massi turning back of the clock on civil liberti are not going to want the US to blundering into Central America and wl knows where else. But, in the end, it is lifestyle that feels arid, joyless, borin one posited on indifference to othe Yuppies don't just not care that others a poor; they also don't know that th comfortable lifestyle depends on oth being poor. The USA has always be rather effective at keeping that idea at b – that is why socialist traditions ha found it so hard to make headway there. yuppies may put some sort of block on t wilder reaches of Reaganism, they are al proof against other visions.

THE NEW SUPERWOMEN

Chris Savage-King

In former times notions of 'health' and 'keep fit' were the province of an 'alternative' section of the community, or an older, more idiosyncratic sect who might also frequent nudist colonies. Such activities, in any event, were those of the crank, the weirdo. They were cues for tittering and raised eyebrows. In recent years, however, this has undergone a drastic transformation. Hard sell policies of marketing have taken over and keep fit is now big business, and a glamour activity. Elegant and expensive health clubs offering workout classes have sprung up in most major cities providing new forms of exclusivity, at a price. The exercise boom has also spawned a lucrative clothes market, and classes will often be sites of conspicuous consumption, the sleekly designed leotard tights being bedecked with ephemera such as arm, leg and ankle warmers, headbands and belts.

There was always a touch of introspective narcissism about even the most doggedly progressive health fads of the 70s. It seems no mistake that this has now, in a fiercer political climate, escalated into a mood of rampant individualism and competitive se improvement. 'I want to be the m perfect me possible' says a character in t latest John Travolta film, *Perfect*, wh takes the aerobics boom as one of themes. She could be echoing a propon of the 'me' decade, except whereas th she might have been addressing her mi body and spirit, now the focus is fi more decisively at the visible, exter body.

This aspect has been prevalent since t instigation of the new workout. 'Y must be committed to working ha sweating hard and getting sore . . . I *h* to push myself to my limit because I preparing for competition' said J Fonda in her best-selling workout bo in which she constantly compared body to a machine and referred to food 'fuel'.

This frantic, resoundingly physi form of improvement is manifest in style of the aerobics class itself. M dance classes, and this applies whet the form be ballet, tap or t'ai chi, encourage the pupil to experience a w range of textures and qualities of mo ment, and variations in tension and fl

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iis is aided by an accompaniest who will ry his or her music accordingly, and an structor who will make use of metaphor d imagery in their teaching. Although ncerned with the body, a mind-body nnection is forged by the fact that it ould be important to understand and perience what the movement might feel e, as well as look like, and thus expand dily awareness as well as a purely ysical potential.

In the original aerobics workout all tion of feeling or even looking were cast ide: all we knew was that it would feel comfortable, the muscle would 'burn', be precise, and a sense of aesthetic gagement was overridden when a acher demonstrated on a podium, outing instructions, rather than aching, and the exercise, performed to e thudding monotone of disco musak, is conducted at too brisk a pace to able care in alignment or attention to ality. The 'look' was therefore concen-ited intensively on the exterior body – agility, its slimness, and the decorative thing. It was significant that the only n-practical verbal exhortations of aero-cs teachers concerned the good the ercise would do in 'trimming' various parts of the body. Aerobics and its derivatives is leisure, but it is also a very pragmatic form of leisure.

Aerobics is also a form of exercise aimed chiefly at women, and its connections with slimming and general ideas of 'beauty' are very strong. Most participants that I spoke to said that the workout as slimming aid or diet substitute was one of their chief reasons for attending classes. The prescribed physical type is one of the most fetishised images of women we have seen for some time: the aerobics queen has no stomach, often no breasts either. She is not so much a woman as an amalgam of the adolescent girl and the boy. To offset any ideas of androgyny, a liberal use of cosmetics is employed, and there is usually a wild mane hairdo, bringing with it a tantalising hint of animality, and also in its tactile luxuriance, compensating for the insubstantial quality of the body. Although somewhat Amazonian, the woman is small-boned: frail to look at, even if possessed of sinewy muscular strength.

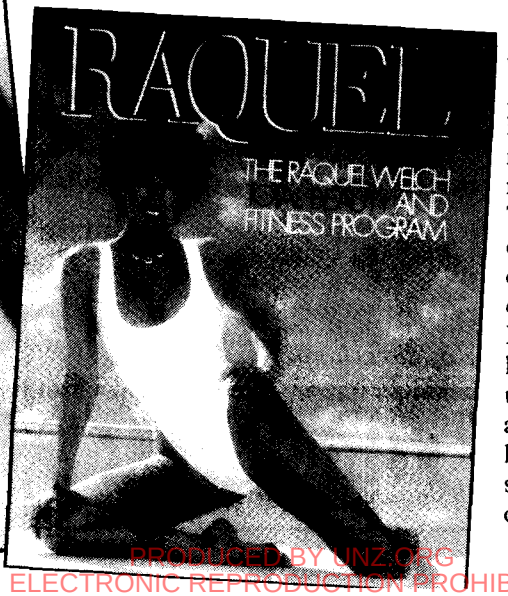
In Jane Fonda's *Workout Book*, the actress warned of fanatical approaches to dieting and refuted the idea of an 'ideal body', even though this was somewhat contradicted by the high profile she, wafer thin herself, maintained in the book, cassettes and videos, testifying to the efficiency of the exercise scheme, and acting as its chief advertisement. In the plethora of volumes that have followed – those of Joan Collins, Victoria Principal, Linda Evans, Sophia Loren and Raquel Welch – the 'beauty' element has been stressed over and above that of health. Diet is discussed in slimming rather than nutritional terms, and chapters on hair, nails and clothes are common. Victoria Principal takes an especially tough line on physical imperfections: her book includes a chapter on plastic surgery. Advice on sex, in conciliatory, 'how to please your man' terms is regularly included.

The healthy women, it appears, must also of necessity, be a sexy woman. One of *Perfect's* most lengthy sequences involves a huge aerobics class, where Travolta and Jamie Lee Curtis make eyes at each other while performing an angry, jerky sequence of pelvic thrusts. The scene would be laughable if it weren't performed with such smouldering conviction.

Pornography has not been slow to pick up on the trend. *Penthouse* magazine examines the new 'Superwomen': 'The days of the soft, fleshy woman are over. Now, men like their women to be tough and toned . . . women are finding that strength and power can be very sexy indeed'. More explicitly, at the lower end of the scale, 'health club girls' have now joined the ranks of models, disco dancers and strippers who pose for photographs and talk intimately about their sex lives, revealing all the voracity, yet predictable submission to male sexual mores of their softer, fleshier sisters of old. 'Does being so fit help your sex life?' asks an interviewer in *The Blue Book*. 'Of course it does', replies the enthusiast, 'it means you can get into any sort of position you like'. Meanwhile Victoria Principal betrays an enthusiasm for quantity when she claims her scheme helps sex life as it enables you to go on for longer periods!

A reactionary political climate often produces an emphasis on the 'real' and the 'natural', and in aerobics as it's marketed, we find a perfect example of the new real woman. There can be no recourse to artificial beauty aids – except, perhaps, for the reassuringly permanent recourse to plastic surgery – but the woman must be a perfect specimen down to her bones. As women are more sexually available, her body, rather than her clothes, act as a monitor of her status. The idea can even make a spurious claim to egalitarianism. There need be no huge outlay on decoration, bar that required of the classroom, she just needs to workout conscientiously: therein lies true beauty. Looking good is hard work, perhaps harder than it's ever been, but the work is ultimately trivialised. It is barely imaginable that books ostensibly concerned with health, aimed at men, might be greeted seriously if offered by a film star, as opposed to an expert in the field or

Curtis leads aerobics workout in Perfect.



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someone possessing professional medical qualifications. Yet this trend for a star adviser has taken a firm hold.

This isn't to say, however, that the picture is totally bleak. The imperatives on women to be beautiful and slim existed before the exercise boom. It is unlikely that an exercise or fitness scheme could have become as widespread without the surrounding gloss of glamour. Exercise, in itself, offers benefits that cannot be encompassed in 'beauty' or 'slimming' when the latter are undertaken exclusively. Dance classes, yoga or sport might be more encompassing, fulfilling forms of exercise, yet some exercise is usually better than none at all, and the workout has the advantage of being the most readily available form, often reaching women – sedentary office workers and housewives – who would otherwise get little exercise.

Since the first wave of aerobics and consequent large-scale injury rates, the aerobics label, delusive anyway[1], has tended to be dropped and the forms of workout available are more diverse. Although arbitrary and gimmicky titles often result in confusion and disappointment, the dilution of the original high speed, punishing ethos has resulted in fewer injuries, and a less frantic attitude to the body. Exercise teachers seem fairly determined to replicate the format of the workout books, becoming localised 'stars' in the class, with teaching still at a premium, and overcrowding of classes frequent.

However, there are national associations now that monitor and offer courses for teachers, and the incidence of cowgirl instructors has diminished. Recently, community centres have started to run exercise courses and here the lower turnover rates and less intimidating atmosphere can sidestep many of the competitive prerogatives of the more impersonal and status-conscious environments. And, whereas city-based classes tend to attract the 18-35 age group, in community classes the age range is broader. The pursuit of an ideal physique is less likely, and the classes serve functions other than that of 'slimming'. They can help a woman escape from home and family for an hour or two, as crêches are often provided, and they can act as a means of meeting other women. If slimming is still a main motivating fact there might also be other benefi Women report increased self confiden about their bodies, some even claim feel safer, or at least more capable on t streets because of improved fitnes Increased stamina can iron out troubl sleep patterns, and also mentioned was refreshing clearing of the mind, aw from workaday problems, that results intense concentration on physical exe cise, which can help in ameliorati nervous disorders.

It seems clear that exercise for wom will be marketed and appropriated f highly dubious purposes for some time come. But this does not mean to say that cannot be used for genuinely healthy s help. There is a narrow bounda between individualism and self dete mination, and some women have four that they can cross it to their advantage.

[1]Aerobics is basically any form of exercise th will work the cardiovascular system harder order that more oxygen will be absorbed into t body and directed to the working muscles. increases the body's ability to absorb and de with oxygen. Most exercise, most notably spo operates in this way. Fonda's initiative was workout system with a specific aerobics section.

Militant-dominated Liverpool has taken all that Thatcher's Government could throw at it and come out fighting every time. Michael Parkinson, of Liverpool University's centre for urban studies, has been an active observer of the struggle from the beginning.

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Beyond the Fringe – Where now for the Left?

Marxism Today

An Autumn programme of discussion and debate in London, sponsored jointly by Marxism Today and the London District Committee of the Communist Party.

Towards International Peace Year, 1986.

Southwark Peace Forum

Speakers: **James Hinton,** CND national executive; **Sally Davison,** Communist Party peace advisory; **Peter Tatchell,** Bermondsey CLP; **Southwark Greenham women spokesperson.**

Sunday 6 October, 2pm to 6pm
Bells Garden Community Centre, 19 Buller Close, SE15 (corner with Commercial Way). Buses 63, 78, P5. Creche for under 5s (book in advance: Liz Wright, 6 Colegrove Road SE15 6ND); access for disabled people.

Is Thatcher Running Out of Steam?

The government seems to be losing its grip, with no Falklands factor in sight.

Speakers: **Stuart Hall** (author), **Sarah Benton** (dep editor New Statesman), chaired by **Philippa Langton** (C.P. Executive Committee).

Thursday 10 October, 8 pm
Islington Red Rose Club,
129 Seven Sisters Road N4
Finsbury Park tube.

Left Alive in Lewisham.

An all day festival of political and cultural debate.

Workshops
Ireland, Ballots and Bullets; Beyond Black Sections; Staying Alive; Shortchanging the low paid; NUM – beaten or victorious ?; Town Halls under seige; Choice – what choice? Greens are good for you; Education gets a canning; Gays and censorship; Fowlers foul up;

Speakers include: Pete Carter (CP Industrial Organiser), **Sally Davison** (Delegate to the recent Japanese conference on disarmament), **Zelda Curtis** (Feminist socialist and founder of N. London Older Womens Group), **Geoff Hardy** (Greenwich Lesbian and Gay Rights Group), **John Peck** (CP National Election Agent), **Peter Tatchell** (Labour Candidate – Bermondsey 1983), **Julie Lawrence** (NALGO), **Alan Booth** (CPAG), **Danielle Stone** (London District CP).

Plenary Session. **'What's Left'** with: **Tricia Davis** (CP Political Committee), **Martin Jacques** Editor 'Marxism Today'), **Jeff Rodrigues** (Sussex District CP).

Sunday 19 October: 9.30am – 5.30pm
Lee Centre, Aislibie Rd SE12 (Off Lee High Rd)
Registration: £2.50 waged/£1.00 unwaged day only; £4.00 waged)/£2.00 unwaged day and dance to LBCP, 12 Elswick Rd, SE13.

Does the peace movement have a future?

Speakers: **Jon Bloomfield,** CP Executive Committee; **James Hinton,** CND National Executive Committee; **Barbara Egglestone,** Christian CND; **Kelvin Hopkins,** National Secretary TU CND; chair: **Francis Aprahamian,** Milton Keynes CND.

Thursday 31 October 7.45pm
Hornsey Town Hall (small hall)
Crouch End Broadway N8

Finsbury Park tube and W7 bus.

Primary education: socialist perspectives.

A one day discussion conference on current issues.

Saturday 2 November
Polytechnic of Central London
New Cavendish Street, W1
(Oxford Circus tube)
10am to 5pm creche
To book and further details – from Keith Ebbutt, 16 St John Street EC1M 4AL.

Speakers include:
Neil Wilson (Primary Teacher); **Ena Abrahams** (Nursery Advisor); **Nancy Connell** (English as Second Language Specialist); **Keith Ebbutt** (Secretary C.P. Education Advisory); **Ann McKay** (Educational Visitor).

Local Government and Socialism – A Public conference.

Workshop discussions:– ■ "Left councils – Model employers? – Managing change". Decentralisation, D.L.O.'s. ■ "Local Government – For the people or by the people". Democracy, power-give or take? ■ "Main Line or Bread Line?" Local authorities and voluntary sector, new perspectives. ■ "Building the campaign for 1986 and beyond . After abolition, Local Socialism – delusions of grandeur?

Plus Forum, Where next for the Left?
11am (Registration and refreshments from 10.30am) to 3.30 pm.
Saturday 23 November, Clapham Community Project, Venn Street, SW4. (Clapham Common tube). Creche provided.

Jenny Thornley (Co-op Advisor); **Mark Page** (LDCP, Housing Worker); **Nathalie Hadjifotiou** Local Government Worker).

Life on the Margins.

The Tories are trying to dismantle the Welfare state, to create a large under class – poor, marginalised, powerless. Does this mean 15 million people have no hope?

Among the panel, **Diane Abbot** (Westminster Labour Councillor, Black Sections Steering Committee); **Jack Jones** (Pensioners activist, Past General Secretary T.G.W.U.); **Alan Booth** (Child Poverty Action Group). Speakers in their personal capacity.

2pm – 5pm. **Saturday, November 30th** in the **"Venture Centre",** Wornington Road, W10. (Ladbroke Grove tube).

Racism and London Schools.

How far have I.L.E.A. policies changed things?

A public discussion with **Raj Ray** (Convenor, National Convention of Black Teachers), **Lemah Bonnick** (Research worker, Race Relations Unit, Institute of Education), **Trevor Carter** (Swann Report).

8pm to 10pm. **Thursday, November 14th** at **South Island Library.** South Island Place (between Clapham Road and Brixton Road) Oval tube, SW9.

New Times: New Needs? The unions after the TUC

A forum for trade unionists to look at key questions for London's Labour Movement.

Jack Dromey (T.G.W.U.), **Paula Lanning** (C.P. Executive Committee and N.A.T.F.H.E. Official), **Mohammad Idrish** (N.A.L.G.O.), **Pete Carter** (C.P. Industrial Organiser).

7.30 pm Thursday Nov 21 in **"The Crown and Castle",** 600 Kingsland Road, Hackney, E8. (Junction with Dalston Lane). Buses 48, 149, 30, 38.

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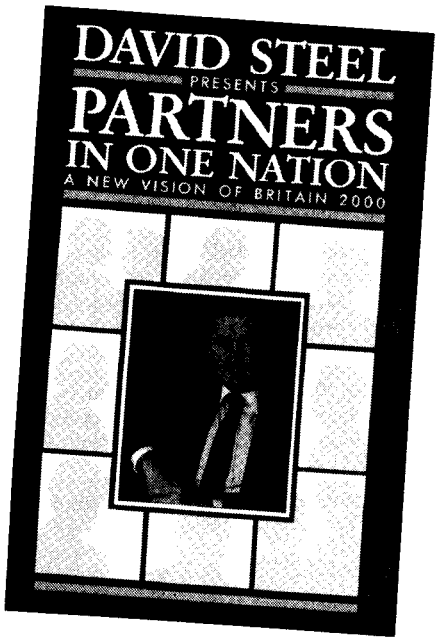
Tories in Polo-necks?

Partners in One Nation: A New Vision of Britain 2000
David Steel
Bodley Head £4.95 pbk

In the Communist party there is a heresy known as class reductionism where every issue is reduced to a simple question of workers versus bosses. David Steel has invented the opposite heresy. When he looks at the world, he sees no class war, no class enemy; he blames it all on Labour and Tory who are 'still fighting the class war of the 1920s and 1930s' and keeping the class struggle alive for their own selfish reasons.

As a consequence his world view, now put into print by Bodley Head as *Partners in One Nation*, can only be described as deeply shallow. It paints a picture where the only problem in the last 40 years is not one side or the other, but the see-saw, the roller-coaster, the stop-and-start between the two. The Liberal approach, on the other hand, is characterised as 'national', 'bi-partisan', and a 'concord', a 'catalyst',



a 'synthesis', a relief from the 'waste created by alternating governments'.

As an example of this he cites the history of the steel industry which has been nationalised, denationalised, re-nationalised, and is now being prepared for privatisation. But the word 'example' implies that it is one of many. In fact the steel industry was the only one of Attlee's nationalisations that the Tories tried to reverse. And the problems of the steel industry are far less to do with David Steel's 'see-saw' than with Mrs Thatcher's slump. This is an example, one of many, of the vacuity of this line of argument, which is really suggesting that if we give up alternating Labour and Tory governments in favour of permanent Alliance government, held in place by the single transferable vote, then all will be well.

There are good reasons, however, for reading this book and for keeping an ear to the policy debate in the Liberal party. They are quite capable of having good ideas. And it would be a strange perversity to ignore them because they are Liberal. The labour movement in this country took far longer to come to terms with the views of J M Keynes, because he was a Liberal, than in other countries.

The traditional marxist view of Liberals is that they are just conservatives in polo-neck sweaters, petty-bourgeois and therefore not to be trusted. Yet the Liberal Assembly espouses some surprisingly 'left' ideas at times – eg, cruise missiles, Irish unity – and even David Steel talks about workers' co-ops in a way that it would be churlish to dismiss as insincere. He makes the point about the *Scottish Daily News* and the Meriden motorcycle co-op, for instance, that they both achieved levels of productivity and efficiency far greater than what went before, and failed only because there was no market.

Liberals sometimes believe in the same causes as socialists and come to the same conclusions, for different reasons and at the end of a different analysis; but it would be just as silly for the labour movement to dismiss their ideas now as it would have been in 1944 to reject Beveridge because he was a Liberal. Instead of regarding them as bourgeois revisionists, as many marxists do, it might be better to see them as people who have no class analysis of politics but will – if only by chance – be right from time to time. Indeed their lack of class reductionism may help them to explore the issues of inflation and incomes policy and profits, as JE Meade does in a chapter of this book, without getting ensnared into fundamental debates about the economic system which, though more important, are not necessarily involved.

The book is full of good ideas and bad ideas, borrowed from here or there, stuck together with glue and sellotape, lacking any ideological framework to fit into, but not to be tipped indiscriminately into th rubbish bin. Many of them, for instanc in John Alderson's chapter on the polic are part of the same language of debate a the Left's.

What seems to spoil it is the need th all the writers seem to have felt to pu themselves in the middle of the spectrum attacking both Left and Right, as thoug the Liberals occupied some higher, holi plane of politics, above the squabblin 'class-based' parties. Thus Steel talk about the tendency that each of us has 't decide which "side" he or she is on in th battle between Left and Right, worke and manager, Labour and Tory. This too simplistic. It distorts human natu and it has deformed our life together i this country.'

But all this means is that he has n ideological framework in which to put h ideas. He can only take a middle positio between two other systems of idea bisecting the distance between Left an Right and keeping an equal distance fro each. This book has not rediscovered philosophy of liberalism, just the politi of coming through the middle.

Martin Linto

The Third World and the West

Development Theory in Transition
Magnus Blomstrum and Bjorn Hettne
Zed £6.50
Aid: Rhetoric and Reality
Teresa Hayter and Catherine Watson
Pluto £4.95
Zapping the Third World: The Disaster of Development Aid
Marcus Linear
Pluto £4.95

Whilst we are taking note of the Live A phenomenon, it is not a bad idea to ta note also of the available campaigni literature concerned with Third Wo issues. There has been a vast change o the years, from the 1960s when the lobby welcomed the Pearson Report, the 80s when the very radical moveme of today have displayed the utm scepticism over the Brandt Repo During the same period, in m academic circles, there has emerged left-wing critical theory – underdevel ment or, more commonly these da dependency theory. This is tot opposed to the optimistic assumptio

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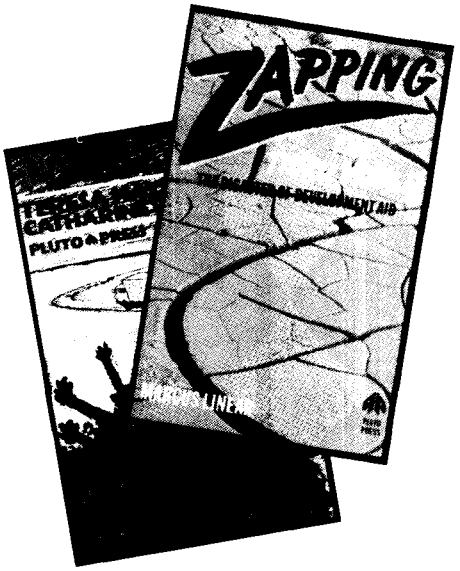
hich still form the basis of orthodox velopment theory, about the possibili- s of development through co-operation tween the less developed countries and e West. The three books reviewed here ould stimulate discussion of the re- vant debates.

Aid: Rhetoric and Reality is mainly ncerned with the World Bank – a llow-up to Teresa Hayter's well-known slaught *Aid as Imperialism*. It is a very eful survey to set against more orthodox counts, persuasively making the case ncerning the World Bank's bias to- rds right-wing regimes, its devotion to ivate enterprise and the market, and the cessive influence within the Bank of the SA. It is appropriately cynical over the pact on the poor of the Bank's phasis on agricultural projects and, ore generally, the 'poverty orientation' the MacNamara era in the 1970s. The pendix by Catherine Watson on her periences whilst working for the Bank ould be required reading for aid chnocrats.

It could however be argued that the licy slogans of 'redistribution with owth' and 'basic needs', popular with e World Bank and other developers in cent years, might have been given a ller airing. The 'basic needs' slogan in rticular is based on the notion that ojects should not just raise national come in the hope that the benefit will ickle down' to the poor, but should ecify the target groups and their needs, d so arrange output and income that ose needs are met. Although coming om the traditional aid agencies, this ses questions of reform versus revolu- n, of utopian delusion versus realism, d of the relationships between states, at are at the heart of all discussion of l.

Marcus Linear's target is the impact of estern aid and agribusiness on Africa, pecially the impact of the pesticides th which agribusiness destroys the bitat of wildlife to create the conditions the successful rearing of cattle for port markets. He lays about this in a newhat indisciplined way. He is fasci- ting on tropical forests, wildlife, the oture of apes for zoos, the spread of serts, and the tsetse fly. He isn't amoured of national park conservation licies. He favours controlled wildlife lisation for food purposes, quite likes nting (for food) and even has a eaking regard for the tsetse fly which, he says, preserves wildlife habitats from cattle encroachment. However, and notwithstanding his entertaining attack on his *bête noire*, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Marcus Linear's book does not make out the case implied by the title. His arguments demonstrate that there are some very complex problems involved, and in particular that national Third World policies are at stake as well as Western interests searching for profits.

Development Theory in Transition is, in spite of its title, largely an exceedingly useful survey of dependency theory, which is the polar opposite of what most of us would call development theory. Dependency theory emphasises the exploitation by capitalist centre of Third World periphery, the extraction of surplus, the imposition of export crop monocultures, the role of comprador ruling elites, and the prevention or at least the 'distortion' of development. It has never been far from political engagement and the book is very strong on the political background to the theory's origins in Latin America, its period of influence in the Caribbean and Tanzania and its relative failure to gain credence in India. In Latin America, in the hands of at least



some of its exponents, dependency theory involved an attack on the local Communist parties' assumption that development could happen in a classical marxist way by means of an alliance of workers with the national bourgeoisie against feudal oligarchies. In both the Caribbean and Tanzania the academic argument was sharpened by the involvement of radical economists in policy formulation. In India, with its own massive intellectual resources and its history, the Left has long had its own well thought out attitude to imperialism and to its indigenous exploiting classes.

Blomstrum and Hettne accept the general verdict that the dependency school is now in disarray, and discuss at length its failings. Insofar as dependency theory is also referred to as neo-marxism, it is criticism by marxists that has provoked most debate. Marxist critics have argued, among other things, that indigenous capitalist development *is* occurring in the Third World, and not just as an appendage of the transnational corporations (TNCs) – though obviously in a very different milieu from that of the classical capitalist development of 19th century Europe. In addition, state-led development is a characteristic accompaniment of, or even alternative to, capitalist development, and the state is not necessarily to be seen as an appendage either of indigenous or of transnational capitalism. It reflects much more complex sets of forces. This all amounts to the need for far more attention to be paid to causal factors internal to Third World social structures as against the excessive influence previously attributed to the international capitalist environment.

What are the implications of all this for radical campaigning organisations in Britain which certainly have, to date, been closely associated with dependency theorising? It could be argued that a mistaken picture of the TNCs as the cause of all Third World ills contributes to an equally false picture of the Third World as a uniform set of innocent, helpless victim states – a picture which, in due course, revolutionaries in those countries may reject as having provided convenient alibis for many reactionary regimes. TNCs are opportunistic, amoral, profit-grabbing overpowerful units of world capitalism, but they don't rule the world alone. There are those on the Left for whom any attack on TNCs is its own justification. But the Third World campaigners are genuinely seeking constructive solutions to world poverty and need a less one-dimensional approach. They are also creatively concerned with policy both for the Third World and for Britain. It seems clear that those marxists who are engaged in theoretical reformulation need also to join in a collective attempt at policy production. Hopefully, these three books will help to provoke such an attempt.

Phil Leeson

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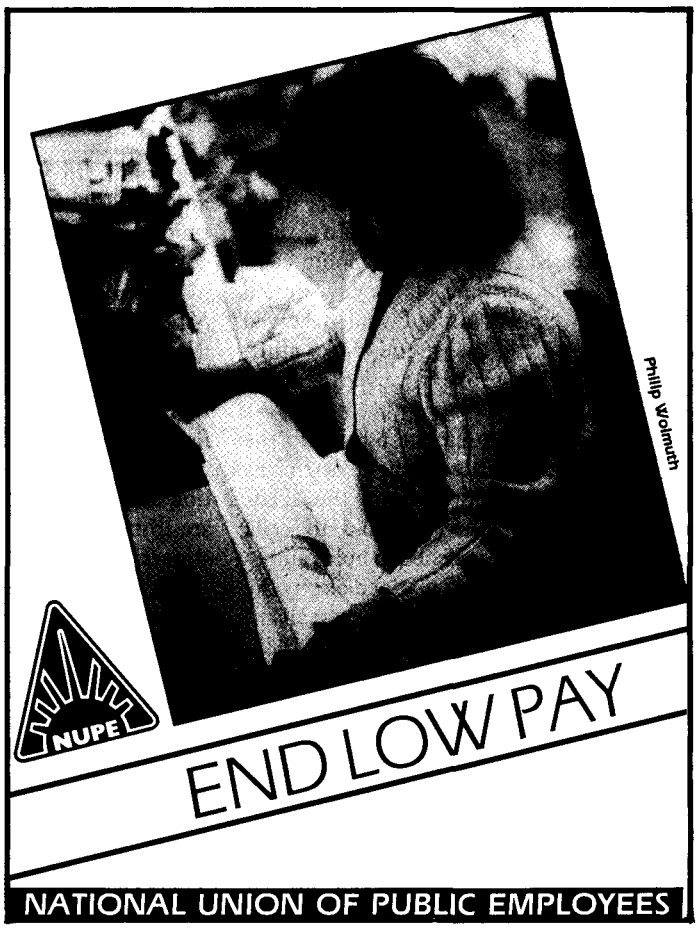

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Union

BLACKPOOL ON T

WILL THE TUC SPLIT?

It wasn't a fudge at all, of course: or rather, if fudge can be threadbare, it was a threadbare fudge. Really more of a polite capitulation. Keeping one of the few united labour movements united well deserved any amount of the sweet and sticky stuff, and if the TUC brokers moved late and slow, so what?

So this. The settlement by which the engineers (AUEW) and the electricians (EETPU) were kept within the TUC forced the unions as a whole to cede ground some at least wished to hold, and to move on to new ground mapped out by the two craft unions. The phrase, new realism, may have been coined in Blackpool 1983, but it was effected in Blackpool 1985.

The ostensible argument was over taking state aid for conducting ballots, first made available under the 1980 Employment Act: but the motor force beneath it was and remains the never resolved debate over how far British unions are political, how far industrial, entities. It is an area of facile answers but no final answer: a process rather than a decision, whether that be taken at Congress, or union conferences, or anywhere else.

Let us take the opposing poles of the argument. There is the view, advanced by Tony Benn, that 'non political trade unionism is an impossibility'. On a banal level that is right: trade union leaders must lobby governments as part of their representative function, will have certain programmes which they wish to see brought in of value to their members or the growth of their unions, will be the products within their own organisation of at least a covertly political struggle. But to say that is not to distinguish trade unions very much from the National Farmers Union, and that is clearly not what Benn had in mind. His vision is rather of unions playing an integral part, with Labour, in both opposition and government, as a mobilising force for radical change, as a popular, democratically determined structure, or layer of structures, with which working people can engage and express and struggle for their aspirations. It is implicitly a monolithic view of unions: their leaderships, memberships and the Labour party form, or should form, an indissoluble fraternity for socialism and for a socialist programme, as determined by party conference.

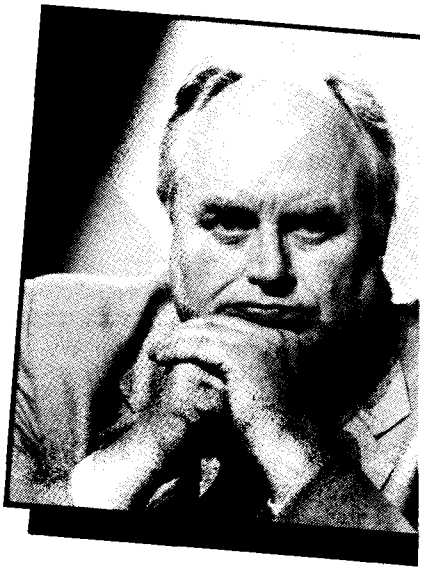
Then there is the industrial unionism argument, to which the prime minister adheres. That says that if there must be unions, their functions are, or ought to be, confined to representative ones at the place of work over the issues of the workplace. Mrs Thatcher came to power with a deep dislike of the concept of the labour movement: of the apparently inescapable fact of British life that the main opposition party flew now on a political, now on an industrial wing. She wished to break the connection: she has not done badly, though there are ironies in the situation which are now apparent.

Between these extremes lies the practice. In practice, even the furthest left – say, the mineworkers – has to call a halt to perpetual activism when the activists (though not their leader) plumb the depths of its futility. Even the furthest right, in practice – say, the electricians – are moved, or feel they ought to appear to be, by a common protest against the banning of unions at the government's communications centre. And in practice, with much straining and pulling, the show has been kept on the road. That it nearly came off, and may still, shows that the practice, on both Left and Right, has tended towards the polar extremes more than in the past, and has had less of a central pull of gravity to stop it.

The Left has attempted, most notably in the miners' strike, to destabilise and ultimately unseat the government through politically structured industrial action. The Right has sought to come to terms with a revived managerial class and a weakened union movement by striking deals which cede much in the way of promises to behave well in return for a certain advance in consultative practices, but often just for recognition itself. The first sees no scope for any more than a hostile neutrality: the second accepts the government as the only one we've got.

Congress did not put a full stop to this continuing argument, but it did face the Left with a test from the Right, a test it funked. The Left appeared stronger than it was, because it had the support of the Centre and even some on the Right on a constitutional issue: the AUEW must, after all, obey collective decisions, must it not? But when both sides looked over their separate abysses, there was no doubt as to which had the further to fall. The AUEW, with comrades in arms the EETPU, had all the uncertainties and internal strains setting up an alternative union centre face: the rest of the TUC had all certainty that if they went they wo provide a magnet for dissidence.

A secure movement could have faced engineers and the electricians down. C as battered and insecure as ours could n Hence the threadbare fudge. What h pens now will depend very heavily inde on whether or not the leaders of movement can develop some real stat manship and so position the TUC tha can provide something of the partnersl it is committed to give to Labour for next election, and without which –



Norman Willis – heavy problems at Blackp

matters are presently structured – Lab is likely to lose, or at best not win.

The Right will call the tune, so it l better be heeded. Ballots are now here, it matters little if unions decide to t state aid for holding them, or not: th unions which wish to remain untainted the grounds that the government may s the tender trap once they have beco dependent on the cash fix, and dict further terms on how and who to bal can of course refuse to apply. It is har surprising, or reactionary, that memb should like being balloted on import issues such as strike action or leadersh to deny them the opportunity on grounds that activists have decided a di rent system in their name is true, worked well for decades – but doe work now.

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OCKS

The TUC after Blackpool
Eddie Shah's challenge to Fleet Street
Banking on the future for women

Scene

Is there any basis left for opposing it? ıd is any basis for opposing it *left*? Here e irony is now apparent: the balloting ovision of the 1984 Trade Union Act ıich prescribes ten-yearly ballots on un-ıs' political fund is turning into a victory ndwagon, as union after union record ge majorities in favour of 'keeping a ice'. Official after official, too many for :o be mere orchestration or propaganda, ve testified that the campaign has meant :ontact and a dialogue with their mem-rs they had never before experienced or ɔught possible: some have discussed litics more deeply than ever before. ıey have discovered there *is* widespread :ecurity, confusion, desire for a change: t also a fear of Labour, based on real, her than deluded, perceptions. Going t to the members has rammed home the t that reality cannot be manipulated by ıference vote or activist caucus and that ıning a consensus may be slow and the ıls won modest compared to the glory of olutions, but it is now so clearly the only y. The Left better learn that – a lesson ich need never be to its disadvantage – continue in futility.

John Lloyd

IAPING UP TO SHAH

year ago Eddie Shah announced his ns to launch a 1½m circulation, full our, seven-day, non-union newspaper ng full new technology. He overstated position saying that 'national news-ɔer publication is a market wide open l ready to be taken'. Britain's press is ıtrolled by five multi-millionaires who n nearly all the 15m daily, 17m Sunday l 8m provincial papers circulating and y will not give up easily.

)n the contrary, Shah's intervention led to rare expressions of unity ɔngst the press barons. When Maxwell ɛed out his workforce for 12 days ɛntly, the other proprietors guaranteed ı £400,000 per week to offset his es. It has also galvanised them into gressing their own plans to introduce r technology to cut jobs and costs, to .ken the print unions, deskill the ıstry and beat Shah at his own game.

'he three major unions in newspapers therefore facing enormous problems at ne when doubts about their effective-ı are being fuelled by their obvious disunity. Recent amalgamation talks have ended acrimoniously exposing deep professional, structural and political tensions.

A key expression of these divisions has been the battles for control over jobs following the introduction of new technology. Each union has crossed the others' picket lines in recent provincial press disputes, creating ever greater hostility between their leaderships. This disunity has encouraged the EEPTU onto the scene offering single union, no-strike agreements for the first time in print. Shah has signed such a deal and Rupert Murdoch is being courted.

Murdoch, like most newspaper proprietors, has invested heavily in new plant and equipment in London's docklands, but he has gone further and employed non-union staff who are currently producing dummy papers. This, like Maxwell's sale of *The Sporting Life* constitutes a major challenge to the unions. The initial result of these developments has been the creation of a 'new realistic' view among some print union leaders. With wars on so many fronts and a rank and file depressed by defeat and division, it is clearly no longer possible for them to simply carry on as usual. Instead, they believe that they should attempt to sort out deals with the other union leaderships now involved in the industry and then smooth matters over with the employers.

If the unions are to have any effective future they must work to re-establish relations at both national and workplace level. This has begun with the resurrection of the Printing Industries Committee of the TUC in a belated attempt to formalise a common approach to Murdoch, Maxwell and Shah and to bring the EETPU 'back into the fold'. At the same time an important joint union rank and file response has been launched which includes a demand for union amalgamations based on shop floor unity.

But the question still remains: will these developments prove sufficient in the face of the employers' determination to cope with the threat Shah poses?

Mike Power

BANKING ON THE FUTURE

A major obstacle for women pursuing careers in banking, as elsewhere, is the break in service they have in order to care for children. While women have had a legal right to maternity leave since the mid 70s, this only extends to 29 weeks after the birth of the child. As a result, many women have to take longer breaks and find on their return that they are treated as new starters, no matter how much experience they have.

Last year, ASTMS and the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU) submitted a claim for a retainer scheme to the Midland Bank. This gives women the option to take up to five years off work on top of their statutory rights. But unlike a number of similar agreements in local authorities, this scheme enables women to maintain contact with their employers and their jobs. This is important if women are going to be in a position to take up their career after such an extended break in a rapidly developing field like banking.

The unions and management have identified a number of ways in which this can be achieved: all women on the scheme are expected to work for at least 10 days a year. If a woman wants to work for more – and she may, especially towards the end of her period on the scheme – the bank will attempt to provide the appropriate opportunities.

On their return, women will retain their grade with the appropriate salary while any further training will be tailored to their individual needs.

From this description, it isn't surprising to learn that the retainer scheme is at present restricted to the small number of women who have made it into the managerial grades at the bank, thereby excluding the overwhelming majority of the bank's women employees numbering around 27,000 who are stuck on junior clerical grades.

The unions are unhappy with the bank's refusal to extend the scheme to all its women employees but feel, nevertheless, that it does represent a start in offering women – and men as well (the scheme is open to men and people adopting babies, again if they are in the appropriate grades) – a chance to spend an extended period at home with their children and at the same time offering them the kind of career support needed.

Donna Haber

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PERSONAL

■ Australian Marxist (Forties, female, likes classical music) a daughter (sixteen, likes rock) London, near Kensington, De '85 to Jan. '86. Would like to correspond view concert/the outings. Please reply: Fay Gre School of Business and Administrative Studies, Sydn Technical College, Mary Ann Street, Ultimo, NSW 2007, Australia.

EVENTS

■ **Arthur Scargill addresses th Haldane Society. 27th September, 7.15pm. Conw Hall, Red Lion Square, Lonc WC1. All welcome. Entranc 50p/£1/£1.50.**

■ **Prospects for the Left in Britain.** Marxism Today Forui with Cllr. Jack Turner, Gordan Will (NUPE) and Nina Temple (CPGB). Sat. Sept 28th, 3pm. Sutton H Community Centre, Telford. Followed by evening concert. Further information from Der Ellwand. Tel: (0952 48284).

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Update

NEWS

n't Pay, Won't Pay Dario Fo's medy, goes on tour this month to mmunity venues in the West dlands and then to Barnsley, therham, Huddlesfield and Shef-ld. Details from: Theatre Foundry 1 526 6947).

a home A march by young ople to highlight the callous atment of single unemployed ople in board and lodging accom-dation. Starting on the north east st it goes through Leeds, eshire, Manchester and Lancashire arrive at Tory party conference in ckpool on Oct 11 with a petition. ntact: Tyne and Wear Trades uncil, 2 Jesmond Rd, Newcastle on Tyne, NE2 4PO (091 281 2242).

vda Benefit Artists, musicians, ge hands and staff at the National eatre are giving their services free a benefit performance of 'Prav- in aid of the Ethiopian Appeal d. Oct 6, Olivier Theatre, South k, London at 7pm. Tickets: 01-2252; credit cards 928 5933.

ba Si A survey of 25 years of t-revolutionary Cuban cinema at National Film Theatre until Oct 6. ails: 01-928 3282.

CAMPAIGNS

men against Sexual Harassment advice and counselling centre to st those sexually harassed at rk, develop legal strategies, mote training programmes and ease awareness of the effects of assment. At the City Centre, hia House, 32-35 Featherstone St, don EC1 (01-250 0340).

lter, the housing charity, are blicising the effects of proposed ernment legislation which would w councils to sell property to elopers taking away security of ure from tenants unable to ord a mortgage. Information: 157 terloo Rd, London SE1 (01-633 7).

MEETINGS

eath the White Coat, a seminar es on Science and Politics in the 8s organised by the British Socie- or Social Responsibility in Science. Lang, director, London Food nmission, on 'Mass Food, Mass tics', Oct 7 at 8pm. Duncan pbell, *New Statesman*, 'Myths Realities of Surveillance, Oct 21,)pm at Adams Arms, Conway St, don W1. Information: 25 Horsell d, N7 (01-607 9615).

erty Public meeting organised by gow CP. Speaker Alan Booth, nor of *Life on the Margins*, Oct 16 .30pm at the Star Club, Carlton e, Glasgow.

The Human Race and the Arms Race Meet Bruce Kent. Organised by Highgate CND, Oct 21 at 8pm. Jacksons Lane Community Centre, Archway Rd, London N6.

Southwark Peace Forum Speakers: James Hinton (CND), Sally Davidson (CP), Peter Tatchell (LP) and participants from Southwark Greenham Women. Questions and Workshop discussions. Crêche (under 5s please book). Disabled facilities. Sunday 6 Oct, 2-6pm at Bell's Garden Community Centre, 19 Buller Close, London SE15. Information: 6 Colegrove Rd, London SE15.

CONFERENCES

Third World War Conference organised by CND, END, Nicaragua and El Salvador Solidarity Campaigns. Have Nuclear Weapons kept the Peace? Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Oct 12, 10-6pm, registration: £7. Oct 12, 10-6pm.

Politics of Work Organised by History Workshop. Sessions: work and gender, work and the working class and work and culture. Speakers: C Hall; S Alexander; C Cockburn; D Thompson; T Lane and R Patel. Oct 19-20 at Ruskin College, Walton St, Oxford. Contact: 0865 56041.

National Abortion Campaign 10th National Conference includes a panel on Warnock with Dr Ann McLaren and Jo Richardson, and review of abortion internationally. Oct 26-27, 10am at County Hall, South Bank, London. Crêche and disabled access. Details: Wesley House, 70 Great Queen St, London WC2.

Housing and Rates Conference organised by Glasgow CP. Workshops on: the public sector, the private sector, the alternatives, tenants' movement and rates reform. Oct 26, 11-5pm at City Halls, Candleriggs, Glasgow. Details: 041 429 5081.

EVENTS

Crisis in the Arts Moving Forward or Falling Apart? An evening of discussion by art workers, artists and photographers with videos and displays. Bar and crêche. Presented by Midlands District CP on Oct 30 at 7.45pm at the Star Club, 25 Essex St, Birmingham. Details: 021 692 1765.

Amandla The cultural ensemble of the African National Congress, Oct 3-5 at 8pm. Shaw Theatre, Euston Rd, London. Box office: (01-388 1396).

Birmingham Film and TV Festival Includes new releases, special previews, a City in the Cinema retrospective, children's programme, black film forum, day events and awards. Oct 24-Nov 2. At venues across the city. Information: Roger Shannon, Auchinleck House, Five Ways (021 235 3008 or 021 359 5545).

Socialist Book Fair Three days of events, Oct 31-Nov 2. 100 stands of left literature. Debates, readings, forums with authors and radical video. Stuart Hall presents the Publishing for People awards at the Festival Hall, Music Box, South Bank, London. Information: 01-802 6145.

Islington *Marxism Today* readers group. Stuart Hall and Sarah Benton discuss 'Is Thatcher Running Out of Steam?' Oct 10 at 8pm at the Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7.

Left Alive in 85 South East Midlands District CP and *Marxism Today* school on the crisis, the Left and the CP. Oct 12. Sessions on Thatcherism, the state and socialism, the broad democratic alliance, feminism and socialism, popular culture and popularising socialism. 10.30-6.30pm, also evening social, at Tavistock Centre, Bedford. Information: 8 Crawey Green Rd, Luton, Bedford.

Marxism and Britain Today A day school organised by the Midlands CP on Oct 12. Speakers include Jackie Haywood (CP Education Organiser), 1.30pm at the Star Club, 25 Essex St, Birmingham; £1 (50p unwaged).

Is There a Future for Marxism *Marxism Today* and Wolverhampton Poly Communist Society discussion to be opened by Martin Jacques. Oct 31 at 1pm. C Block, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, St Peter's Site, Wolverhampton. Details from Mark Perryman (0384 238216).

The Poverty Trap Come prepared with your questions and comments to *Marxism Today* question time on the welfare state review, poverty and low pay with Pete Alcock (Labour Social Security Campaign), Chris Pond (Low Pay Unit), Nina Temple (CP). Oct 30 at 7.30pm at Sheffield University Students Union.

CND March and Rally Speakers and entertainment. Oct 26. Assemble 11am Serpentine Rd, Hyde Park. Details from CND (01-250 4010).

Entries for the November Update should be sent to the office by October 3. For information: tel Maria Loftus on 01-249 9509 (evenings) or 608 0265 (day).

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

E Ellis Cashmore is the author of *No Future*, heads a race relations project at Aston University and lives in Handsworth.
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Richard Dyer lectures in film studies at Warwick University and was recently in the US.
Chris Savage-King is an undergraduate at Wadham College, Oxford and is a contributor to *Feminist approaches to Popular Culture* to be published by Croom Helm next spring.
Martin Linton is a journalist on *The Guardian*.
Phil Leeson lectured in development economics until recently and is a member of the CP.
John Lloyd is industrial editor of the *Financial Times*.
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Donna Haber is a divisional officer with ASTMS.
Diana Simmonds is a journalist on *City Limits*.

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CLOSE • UP ON

Madonna

Diana Simmonds

I see the movie, I listen to the records, I buy the book, I study the signs. They point in opposite directions simultaneously. 'From when I was very young, I just knew that being a girl and being charming in a feminine sort of way could get me a lot of things, and I milked it for everything I could.' And at the same time: 'I wanted to do *everything* everybody told me I couldn't ever do.' And she is. It is *alter ego* at work, to millions it is irresistible. It is one of the keys to Madonna.

Born with that name – who would have thought it up, along with the additional appellation Louise Veronica Ciccone, except strict Catholic Italian immigrant parents?

Madonna was brought up in Detroit along with three brothers, four sisters and a classic and urgent desire to make good. She is a good girl. Her mother died when she was eight, her childhood was spent taking care of the little ones. Now she is taking care of herself: mother dear – this girl just wants to have fun, as she might have sung to millions of teeny ears if Cyndi Lauper hadn't done it first. Not that the two, despite certain similarities, are interchangeable. Many – including Lauper herself – feel that of the two it is Cyndi who was the most likely candidate for pop stardom. On the other hand, Madonna is the all-round enhanced media personality: she sings (moderately), but was also pushing it as an actress, dancer and anything else likely to bring the heights within her grasp.

When Susan Seidelman cast the then New York-based and rather interesting cult figure as the desperately sought-after Susan, she had no real sense that she was hitching her film of that name to a rising tidal wave. But Madonna is a smart cookie, she knew what she was about and all along she was aiming at the ionosphere.

And this is no pop girl merely walking through a movie. It is a neatly constructed and assured persona (and at least her third movie appearance). It doesn't stop the putative star of the piece, Rosanna Arquette, being just a little pissed off. On the other hand, it does mean that Rosanna is in an unpredictably *huge* general release smash instead of the star of a marginal arthouse hit.

But is Madonna really the Susan of the film? Is Susan really Madonna? Who cares? Certainly not the millions of 15-year-old Wannabe-Madonnas even now giving their mothers hysterics as they get themselves up as Times Square tarts with sludgy luscious lipstick, charcoaled eyes, massed streaked hair and the clothes – aaagh, good! The clothes! This is putting on the style in great dollops, this is Maybelline and Fabullash country, names not spoken in polite society since the equally over-made-up 60s. But it is one helluva lot more spunky than the '60s ever were: 'Get into the groove' goes her most recent single smash, 'you gotta move boy if you want my love'. Quite what she had in mind is open to several interpretations, at least one of them threatening: currently posters are being amended to 'Madogga – slag – cunt – tart' by boys who run away laughing nervously.

Between the 60s and now there has been women's liberation, of course – derided, ridiculed, but subliminally sunk into everyday life. A dangerous substance, ingested by osmosis, secretly and continually popping up in unexpected places. And then there was Patti Smith and Debbie Harry, Madonna's older sisters in the image and music business. Patti strutted the stuff of independence, actress Debbie created the look, they set the tone of their times. Now Madonna does it for the 80s, but she has brought the two facets together.

That difference is yet another key. One that might hang jangling around her neck along with the rosaries and crucifixes of the good Catholic girl bent on subversion. Who literally obeys her daddy – on stage on the US tour which sold over 650,000 tickets – and has *married*, but who says: 'I can't conceive of living happily ever after for a long period of time with one person'. Whether Sean Penn will be able to put up with being Mr Madonna is probably the answer to that, however. Nevertheless, having committed the conventional she can still observe of the criticisms of her stage show and persona: 'Art and music can never be too permissive, especially if they act as an alternative to the reactionary attitudes of people like Reagan and the Moral Majority.'

Madonna – not Magdalene – despite the studied sleaze and unabashed sweat of strenuous physical performance, there is nothing really dubious here. There is wholesome flesh on her bones, not the sinewy strung-out twitch of Patti and Debbie, nor the anorexic 'slimness' of the fundamentally unsure. Despite what she does with the microphone, nothing nasty enters those pouting lips. Noxious substances haven't taken their toll of the highly energised and sensuously proportioned frame, this is a popcorn and pasta girl. And that reveals yet another key: despite contradictory images, this is no Lolita. Soft porn it verges on, kiddyporn it ain't. Perm any one of three proffered birthdates (57, 58 or 59) and she is a canny, clear-headed young woman.

Her own hands are firmly on the wheel of Madonna Inc, responsible for the monster US tour; merchandising franchises in the Michael Jackson league; Madonna designer boutiques; and at least 12m albums sold worldwide (*not* singles – the computer is still whirling on those statistics). And that is the penultimate key: comparisons with Monroe and Goldie Hawn are more accurate than many realise in that Madonna is as clever and talented as both, as conscious of the power and origin of the fluffy-kooky-muddlehead image as the former, and as in control of it as the latter. And she *plays* the contradictions for all they're worth.

She gets herself up like she escaped from a circus or a bordello and she is nonchalantly unconcerned. Yet she doesn't actually get to *drink* the triple Tequila Sunrise she orders in *Susan* and she doesn't actually engage in unpleasant, unlawful or unkind activities – people only say she does. The perverted bridal outfit she wears for her stage encore has to be the living end and a businessman's fantasy but, when it comes to it, she has clean nails, perfect skin and she shaves her armpits!

And that's the final key to anyone who is in any way seeking Madonna.

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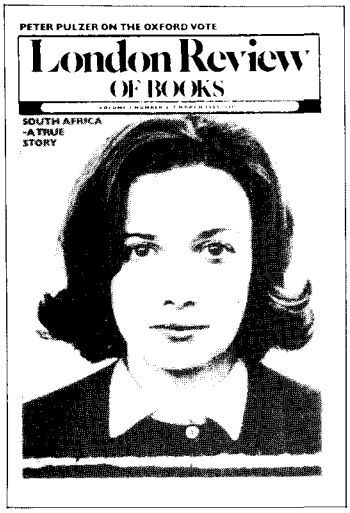

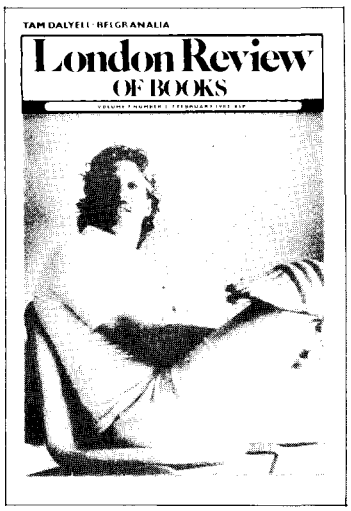

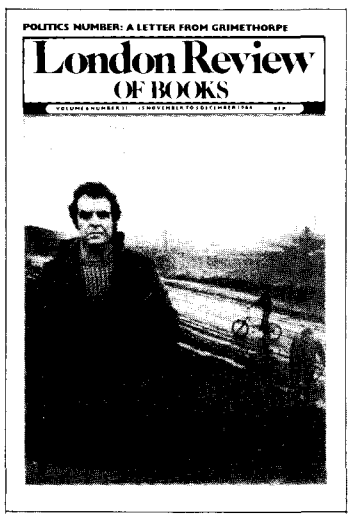

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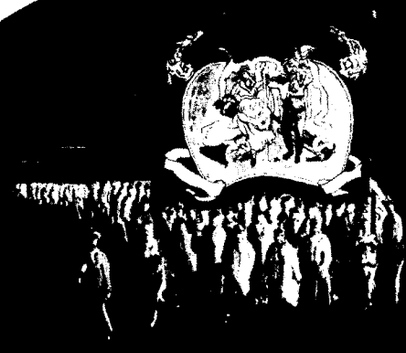

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